# STRONBUY

Hanks of
Highland Yarn.

KU-210-100

# STRONBUY.

## SOME OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"The author of 'Stronbuy' has good powers of description; he has a ready touch in rough portraiture, and he evidently is very well acquainted with the men and things he is writing about. . . . . There is no lack either of incident or action, although the author seems to pride himself chiefly on the development of character by unconscious self-revelation. Many of his people give us so strongly the impression of their being done from the life, that we should be surprised if some of his Highland readers did not recognise in his pages the reflections of themselves, though no one who looks over the illustrations can doubt that the portraits are, for the most part, caricatures."—*The Times.*

"An appreciative and intelligent account of Highland people and life in the present day, as well as a hearty kind of log book of sport."—*Athenæum.*

"There has been nothing in Scotland like the breezy fun and rapid character-sketching in it since Professor Aytoun's time."—*Academy.*

"Thoroughly seasonable, and is an entertaining and by no means exaggerated description of the most characteristic phases of Highland life."—*World.*

"Incidents by flood and fell, comic or pathetic, social, theological, and political, there are in abundance, and with many excellent descriptions of Highland scenery, we are introduced to life in the Highlands in all its aspects. . . . . Sportsmen or tourists who are bound for the North may do worse than include these 'Hanks' in their baggage."—*Saturday Review.*

"It is not only by far the best book of its kind that we remember to have seen, but it leaves the impression that an attempt to produce a better must lead to failure. . . . . The book cannot be read without much wholesome brain-clearing laughter. It sparkles with joke and story. But when the reader is laughing most, he will not fail to see how skilfully prejudices are touched, and follies exposed, and wise lessons taught to those who can learn them. . . . . We know no book in which the dry humour of the Highland Celt is more admirably shown. The man himself is brought before you, with his prejudices and his politeness, his faith and his common sense. In short, 'Stronbuy' may be accepted as the production of a man of keen perception, of much knowledge of the world, of great and wholesome humour, and possessing in an eminent degree the power of presenting to others that which he himself sees and believes worthy of description."—*Scotsman.*

"It is in all respects a treasure. There are few books with which we have any acquaintance that are better for holiday reading—more amusing, or more healthily suggestive of the delights of life as this."—*Scotsman second notice.*

"Very pleasant reading, with a touch here and there of something more serious than laughter, and it seems a genuine transcript of thought and manners. . . . . The personages of the story are excellent, coloured a little, and exaggerated in outline for the sake of fun, but distinctly doing credit to the writer's literary art."—*Spectator.*

---

EDINBURGH: MACNIVEN & WALLACE.

# STRONBUY

OR

## HANKS OF HIGHLAND YARN

BY THE

AUTHOR OF 'TOBERSNOREY'

Edinburgh
MACNIVEN & WALLACE
1882

CHEAP EDITION

# PREFACE.

THE following pages contain an account of a short sojourn in a remote part of the Highlands of Scotland. Should any of the simple stories told here of that enchanted region—not to be found in any gazetteer—have floated out into the great world, and have been met with previously by the reader, let him remember that the author is not the first who ever pitched his tent among the mountains that guard Stronbuy. It is necessary to state that none of the characters in the narrative are to be met with in the flesh.

MOORS, TOBERSNOREY, N.B.,
*Midsummer*, 1881.

# CONTENTS.


| Chapter | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| I. | How we came to Stronbuy, | 1 |
| II. | Our Diggins, | 7 |
| III. | The Twelfth, | 16 |
| IV. | Lairds and Land-Laws, | 28 |
| V. | Celtic Theology, | 42 |
| VI. | The Halls of Tostary, | 49 |
| VII. | Enlightening the Natives, | 60 |
| VIII. | The Bodach of Glenbogary, | 72 |
| IX. | The Frackersaig Ball, | 83 |
| X. | The Supernatural, | 109 |
| XI. | At Brex, | 123 |
| XII. | In the Forest, | 139 |
| XIII. | A Highland Radical, | 154 |
| XIV. | The "Man," | 171 |
| XV. | The Presbytery, | 184 |
| XVI. | A Clerical Symposium, | 198 |
| XVII. | Celtic Philosophy, | 216 |
| XVIII. | A Controversial Yarn, | 231 |

| Chapter | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| XIX. | The Aqueduct, . . . . | 245 |
| XX. | On the Maolachy Shore, . . | 259 |
| XXI. | Eilan Horsa, . . . . | 275 |
| XXII. | The Election, . . . . | 289 |
| XXIII. | Love will find a way, . . . | 301 |
| XXIV. | Gathered Threads, . . . | 310 |

# STRONBUY.

## CHAPTER I.

### HOW WE CAME TO STRONBUY.

IN a room of one of the Government offices, looking out upon St James' Park, might have been seen, on a certain day in July, two underpaid servants of Her Majesty, discharging their duties to their country by the diligent study of contemporary history, as portrayed in the *Times* newspaper. While thus engaged, a tall fair-haired young man was ushered in to them. No one who saw him could have doubted that he came from the land of the Gael; certainly no one who heard his celtic accent could have hesitated as to what part of Scotland he hailed from. The two students of history, rising simultaneously to greet the new-comer, exclaimed :—

"Good gracious, Stronbuy, wherever did you come from?"

"Yes, it's me," replied the Celt. "M'Lauchlan of Achintarive and I are on our way to the Continent

for a week or two. I promised your friend Bob to look you up, and here I am. Bob is wonderfully brisk, though the course of his true love hasn't been running smooth. You would have heard that he is settled at Reudle. Old Sarah is his housekeeper, and keeps him in grand order, I assure you."

It is right here to explain, that the two Government officials aforesaid, with another friend, recruited some years ago their exhausted energies by a Highland tour, in the course of which they sojourned for a time at a comfortable inn kept by the husband of the Sarah referred to, now a widow. While here they made many acquaintances, among others that of the Laird of Stronbuy. He had been exceedingly civil to them, and had introduced them to all the notables of his neighbourhood, so that their holiday passed pleasantly by. One of their number, however, Robert Taylor, familiarly called Bob, succumbed to the charms of one of the many charming Highland girls whom they had met. He accompanied his friends to the metropolis, but soon went back to the North again. He induced an indulgent parent to take a farm for him near the scenes of his amatory experiences, and the Government office saw him no more. After a time, however, news came that his marriage had been broken off, though he still remained at his farm consoling himself in his disappointment by renewed attention to the breeding of black cattle and the rearing of wethers. He was

a merry-hearted fellow, full of fun and joviality, and as pleasant a companion as one well could have. It was sad to think of him living a hermit life, and his friends in London often wished he was back among them once more.

Stronbuy was only to be a night in town before crossing the channel. So an agreement was made that he and his friend Achintarive should dine with the two officials, after the toils of the public service were over for the day. This they did, and a pleasant evening was spent at the Blenheim Club, though Achintarive persisted in discussing some heresy case that had broken out in the Free Kirk, of which he was a devoted adherent.

"I'll tell you what," said Stronbuy, as the party were seated comfortably in the smoking-room, going over their plans for the approaching vacation, "you two fellows had better go down to Stronbuy for your holiday. The factor is there just now, and he and his wife Peggy will look well after you. You can shoot all the grouse if you leave me a few birds between the river and the top of the hill. Bob will come over to see you and tell you of his sorrows, and Achintarive and I will be back again before you leave."

This offer was too good not to be accepted. As the friends walked up Pall Mall, two of them imagined themselves already treading the heather with bounding steps, and Achintarive was left discussing his inter-

minable theology with a Scotch policeman, opposite the Guards' Monument, who vehemently avowed that he belonged to the old Kirk.

In the following pages, written by me, Frank Gunter, gentleman, is told the true and veritable story of my own and the Honourable Ted O'Halloran's doings at Stronbuy. But first it is necessary to explain how we got there.

There are two main lines of travel that lead to Stronbuy from southern regions. The traveller, leaving London at night, can catch next morning the steamer *Columba* at Greenock, in which noble vessel, surrounded with all possible comforts, he will be conveyed to Oban in the West Highlands; or, he can keep by the railway, and in the early morning after leaving town, will find himself rushing along by the Braes of Balquhidder, along the shores of Loch Awe, and through the Pass of Brander, to Oban. Being familiar with the sea route, Ted and I kept by the train, and reached Oban by mid-day. The line is through beautiful scenery, and Oban, the railway terminus, is a charming place to stay at. We were anxious, however, to get to our journey's end, and were fortunate to catch a steamer at the Oban pier, which carried us further north. In the dusk of the evening, we were put ashore at a lonely pier. An old weather-beaten fisherman, who was fishing from it when the steamer came up, touched his hat to us, and then resumed his occupation, leaning over the

side of the rickety wharf, like an old cormorant intent on his prey. Being interrogated whether any carriage from Stronbuy had come to meet us, he replied—

"There was carriage here to-morrow morning, but I'll not see it." This was enigmatical, but we could elicit no further information, so we sat ourselves down on our portmanteaus and smoked patiently.

By-and-by the rumble of wheels was heard, and Stronbuy's "carriage" hove in sight. It was a peculiar vehicle; something like a packing-box slung upon wheels, and was drawn by a rough pony driven by a bare-legged and bonnetless boy. The road was dreary, and it was very dark, but after jolting along for an hour we pulled up with a jerk, the driver got down, and signalled us to descend. There was no sign of any habitation near, except a light on the hill opposite the place where we halted. Then a stalwart man, as we stood watching the boy unharnessing his pony, emerged from the darkness. This individual was "the factor." He took a portmanteau in each hand, and beckoned us to follow him. We did so, first across a piece of bog like a sponge, then over a narrow plank, which formed the only bridge across a dark stream, then up a steep brae on the other side, to where the light streamed out of an open doorway.

"Hark!" cried Ted, "I do believe that is Bob singing."

"Deed is it," said the factor; "he came over apout an hour since, and it's singing he's been all the time. Who but him, as if the whole place was his own."

"Den blow de horn, ye darkies, send de echoes all a-flying,
Open wide de garden gate, and let them all come in;
De tables dey are groaning with de vittles cooked and ready,
And all creation waiting for de feasting to begin."

So we were welcomed to Stronbuy, and glad were we to get there after our long day's journey.

## CHAPTER II.

### OUR DIGGINS.

THE mansion of Stronbuy was not very spacious or palatial; in fact, it consisted only of what is called, in Scotch phrase, a "but and a ben." In one end was a parlour comfortably furnished—a table in the centre, another with a writing desk at the window, a deep sofa, two or three arm-chairs, and hooks all round the wall for game bags and fishing tackle, over-coats, rods, and guns. A bedroom with two beds occupied the other end. In the centre of the house was a small room used as a kitchen; and, got at by climbing a steep, breakneck stair, were two attic rooms also used as bedrooms. The "factor" lived in a thatched hut further up the hill. His wife, "big Kate," was to act as our housekeeper. A skilful woman was big Kate, with muscular arms that would tell in a prize-ring—always at work either in the house or neighbourhood. Her husband, "the factor," though dignified by that name, was really a shepherd. He was a tall, lanky man, much given to meditation, at least one would fancy so, for he was rarely found in any other than a contemplative attitude. While his wife dug potatoes in the plot behind his house, he leaned on his

spade as if in solemn wonder at her activity; and when "a machine" passed along the road on the other side of the river, he gazed after it, long after it had gone out of sight, like a prophet who has seen a vision. He aided his meditations by a plentiful consumption of tobacco—twist he calls it—which looked like hay-rope that has been soaked in oil. The factor was also very partial to a dram, and was not particular about the time of day when he imbibed, though he always prefaced his drinking with an apology, "Isn't it rather early?" "If it was not so cold;" "Perhaps I would be the better of it." The stronger the dram the more it was appreciated. "Ay," said his wife, "Peter likes the good dram, and the strong dram. I mind Stronbuy himself getting a bottle of foreshot for the rheumatisms, and he gave Peter a dram of it. 'Isn't that the pest whisky you never tasted any more, Peter,' says the laird. 'Deed is it,' says Peter; 'I feel it to be a kind of company all day wambling in my inside.' The laird he laughed that loud you would have heard him on the other side of the burn!" The factor, when stimulated to activity, could step out well on the hill, and could carry a heavy game bag on his brawny shoulders with apparent ease. He knew the good pools in the river, and had some skill as to the proper flies to be used. Taken all-in-all, he was not a bad specimen of the Celt, and in his ragged kilt, and carrying an old musket, looked as if he might have been a fugitive from Culloden. He

had two children, a boy and a girl, neither of whom had been much at school, though the one was nine, and the other twelve. Their parents seemed to think it of far more importance that they should pass their time watching the herd of long-horned, shaggy, black cattle which were their peculiar care.

The house at Stronbuy stood on a hill side. Outwardly it seemed not much better than a labourer's cottage; internally it was quite a batchelor's snuggery. There was no garden attached to the house. A few cabbages were cultivated in an enclosure at the back of the factor's cabin. Two rowan trees grew at one end of the house, with ropes stretched between them, from which generally waved articles of apparel hung up to dry. The sky-line of the hill was a good way above us. All round to the very doorway grew bracken and heather. A deep, black crooked river ran a few yards off, on the other side of which was the public road by which we had travelled, and which went on to the village of Drissaig, six miles down the glen. Looking in that direction on a fine day, there could be seen a glimpse of the sea, on the shore of which Drissaig stands, and still further away the rugged peaks of one of the Hebrides.

Of neighbours we had but few. A little way down the glen was the farm of Ballachantui, tenanted by Mr M'Pherson, and about as far again up the valley was that of Toons, held by Mr M'Gilp. Immediately behind the house, about a couple of miles off, and

on the other side of the hill, was the house of Mr Farquhar, a farmer, who had been long in New Zealand, and who went everywhere by the name of the "Squatter." These were our immediate neighbours, but at intervals of a few miles there were others. At the entrance to the village of Drissaig stood, among trees, the manse of the parish, the residence of Dr M'Audle, and a little to the right, crowning a bare unwooded hillock, that of Mr M'Kay, the clergyman of the Free Church. A good many lairds managed to exist in these wastes. There was the great Mr M'Lucas of Tostary Castle, young M'Cracken, M'Lean of Maulachy, M'Lauchlan of Stigarsta, Croker of Drumle, and others of whom the reader may hear in due time. None of them was particularly distinguished except Croker of Drumle; he was a teetotaller, and gave his guests no beverage stronger than water. This made him remarkable for miles around, and when people spoke of him it was in a subdued and saddened tone, as of one wholly given over to evil courses. Reudle, where our friend Bob Taylor lived, was ten miles away.

Our immediate neighbours, who, according to the fashion of the country, bore the names of their farms, were Ballachantui, Toons, and the Squatter, and of these a few descriptive words had better now be said. Ballachantui was a huge man of unwieldy frame and protuberant stomach; his face was always in a ruddy glow, and when he grew animated in speech, he dug

his hands into his matted hair as if he would tear it out by the roots. This singular action of his broke so many of our long church-warden pipes that we were forced to make him confine himself to his black cutty. He had a loud boisterous laugh which shook him all over and made the chair in which he sat rock to and fro. He spoke sententiously, and had a peculiar habit of prefacing his sentences with "Even so," which was the sure prelude to some curious metaphor or analogy, a species of illustration in which he delighted. When he uttered "Even so," he laid hold of his grey locks as if determined not to leave a single one remaining.

M'Gilp of Toons was a quiet diminutive man, destitute of the originality of his neighbour. He was a great gossip, and knew all that went on within a circuit of many miles. The prices people had got for their cattle. The marriage that was soon to come off. The rent the laird was offered for his farm. The last sermon of Mr M'Kay. The current talk of the country side was familiar to him. He seldom ventured on any direct expression of opinion; if he did so it was always introduced by "a friend of mine was saying," or he was told by "one who should know." He never came straight to the door, but seemed as if he was going further up the hill to the factor's. When hailed, he at once came in, and showed no special desire to go away. He and Ballachantui were great

friends, and generally, as the saying is, hunted in couples.

The Squatter was a man of a different type from these two. In appearance he was tall, slight, and muscular, with a thoughtful though somewhat sad countenance. He was never seen outside his door without a grey plaid strapped tightly over his shoulder and round his waist, and a cutty pipe in his mouth. He had been long abroad, and had been tolerably successful. He had enough to live on independent of his farm, and was well read and intelligent. Having left the Highlands when quite a young man, he had returned in the prime of life to settle down. His farm of Letter was a scene of great domestic happiness and unbounded hospitality.

Ballachantui and Toons were both married men, but we saw little of their wives; occasionally we got glimpses of them from the road busy among the cattle or spreading out clothes to dry. When we called they gave us little of their company, setting down such refreshment as they had to offer and then vanishing into other regions. The squatter's wife was a jolly little woman, always bustling about intent on hospitable cares. She was quick at repartee, fond of fun, a great Highlander, and could sing Gaelic songs at the piano with true Celtic expression, and knew all the lairds' families for many miles round. She was proud of her descent, after the manner of the Gaels. Did she not come of the Camerons of Lochiel,

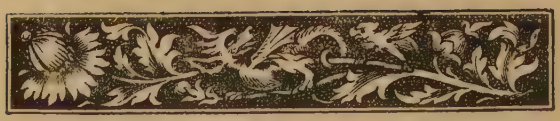
and wasn't her mother's father one of the M'Millans of Ballichroan? not to speak of Black Peter, whom everybody that knew the Highlands knew about; and wasn't her husband a far-off cousin of M'Neil of Hogary. Perhaps, after all, she was prouder of her son than of anything else. Peter was a smart boy who wore the kilt summer and winter. He walked every day to school at Drissaig, six miles off, but in the winter he was to go to his cousin, M'Nab, the writer in Edinburgh, to attend classes at the college, and "to be brought up to the law."

We got our letters and papers three times a week from Drissaig, and the squatter's son generally called with them on his way back from school. There was but one little shop at the village, kept by a man called the Provost; and for any special article required, we had to send the "carriage" and the factor's boy to Tomindoun. Tomindoun was a thriving seaport town, with many shops, each of which seemed to contain everything needed by man here below—cheese, spades, paraffin oil, smearing materials, groceries; and the squatter's wife, Mrs Farquhar, used to say that when she got her knitting worsted, it smelt of all the various condiments sold in the shop. It will be seen that we were well out of the great busy world, though a day and night's hard travel would bring us back to London. Some magazines and a few papers reached us by post, and this sufficed us, so far as reading was concerned. On a single shelf in the par-

lour stood the whole library of Stronbuy. A book on the wild birds of the west, a few volumes of *Punch*, half-a-dozen battered railway novels, and a Bible. We had little time for reading, for we were always out. At night we sat by the fire and talked. Our neighbours often looked us up. If we cared to do anything, there were cartridges to be filled, fishing-tackle to be sorted, the factor to be interviewed and drammed; and we could manage a game of whist with the aid of Ballachantui and the squatter. Toons being an elder of the Free Kirk never played. He looked on, however, in an interested way, as if he knew more about the game than he cared to tell. We had thus considerable elements of happiness of a mundane kind, and the summer days passed pleasantly. We had not been long at Stronbuy when we received a note from the hospitable owner, written at Heidleberg. "I don't mean," he said, "to go back to the swamp in a hurry. Achintarive and I will probably winter in Italy. Achy hopes to convert the Pope to the Free Kirk: so make yourselves at home, and shoot everything you can get. The beer of this country is good."

Our old friend who welcomed us to Stronbuy had to go back to his farm next morning; but as we sat together on the night of our arrival, he told us ruefully the story of his disappointment. Everything had gone well until the young lady's uncle and guardian came home from Australia and bought

Tostary. He brought her to live with him. She took his name, and was to be his heiress. He emphatically refused to allow the marriage to go on. He wrote an insulting letter to Bob, reminding him that his grandfather had made his money by the sale of a patent medicine, and that this fact alone was a sufficient reason for refusing to allow him to ally himself with an old highland family. Bob wrote back in anything but a conciliatory strain, and made very definite allusions to a gaming-house at Ballarat, whence came, it was said, the money that bought Tostary. Miss Kate M'Lucas either made or was not permitted to make any sign of dissent from her uncle's opinions. Apparently she acquiesced in his decision. All this, with many amplifications and strong language in regard to old Tostary, our comrade told us. We three had never any secrets from one another since we were boys at school. "He felt," he said, "that he was a fool, and should go away, but he couldn't do it. This thing," he said, in his old way, "had taken a big hold of him." We could only tell him to cheer up; but when he told us of the grim laird of Tostary, we felt the outlook was not very encouraging.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE TWELFTH.

THE Twelfth of August is the great highland festival dedicated to St Grouse. Where is the sportsman who does not keep that day in kindly remembrance, and to whom—even if in a foreign land, and unable to take part in the celebration—the return of the day does not bring pleasant memories? On the evening previous the dog kennels are solemnly inspected, guns taken out of their cases and held mysteriously to the shoulder, gamekeepers interviewed at length regarding "the birds." In the morning an array of men and dogs stand about the lawn in full view, through the window, all the time of breakfast. Then pipes are lit, and there is a joyous sallying forth, the ladies accompanying the party down the laurel walk to the gate, where they arrange the meeting for lunch by the spring at the top of the brown brae. The different "beats" are told off, and pointers and setters go ranging about, and shot follows after shot, until a little after mid-day, the braves come together, stretch themselves out on the heather; and bags are emptied and counted, hampers unpacked, corks drawn, and the gallant hunters are ministered to by the fairest of the

fair, clad in shortened petticoats and deer-stalking hats. The remembrance of the past, says the Persian proverb, is a sigh!

At Stronbuy the twelfth was celebrated in no very imposing fashion. No fair ones were there to wish us good luck. No unpacked hampers awaited us at a mountain spring. The factor, carrying a capacious game bag, and followed by his boy with a brace of dogs, made his appearance after breakfast. Ted and I leisurely sallied forth with our breechloaders, and quietly stepped on to the heather, firing our first shots a few yards from the door. Our plan was to work up the glen till we came to the burn that formed the Stronbuy march, and to follow up this till we reached the top of the hill, where the squatter was to meet us. We were then to go over his ground during the rest of the day, and to dine with him in the evening. The day was calm and warm, so warm that we could hardly get the dogs to work; and sometimes they lay down as if completely exhausted. We got on wonderfully well, however, by keeping steadily at it. The birds were by no means numerous, but with a few hares we were able to lay a good burden on the factor's back. At the march we met the squatter according to appointment, and sent back the boy with our birds and dogs—Mr Farquhar having his own pointer and setter, two as tidy, useful animals as I ever saw. We then worked down to the loch side, beside which his house stands, and reached his gate

with our spoils at dusk. Altogether we got that day thirty brace, half a dozen hares, two snipe, and a wild duck. Not a bad day's work.

Letter stands by the side of Loch Feeshnish, a large sheet of fresh water. The house is a good two-storied building, with a large garden in front of it well stocked with fruit trees. A path leads from the door to the garden gate, where it joins the high road leading to Drissaig. The stables and cattle houses are at the back. It is in every way a pleasant dwelling-place. And if you stand at the garden gate and look over the loch towards Ben More and its noble range of mountains, you have before you an almost unequalled view of highland scenery.

As we reached the gate this evening, we saw a little grey pony being led round to the stable.

"That's Miss M'Lucas from Tostary," said the squatter. "She's an extraordinary girl that, she goes tearing over the whole country alone on horseback. I often wonder her uncle allows her; but he is so taken up with his money, that he can think of nothing else. She and my wife are great friends."

In the little parlour, accordingly, we found Miss M'Lucas. She was a tall, handsome girl, with fair hair, and dark blue eyes. Her manner was abrupt, and she met us with a defiant light in her eyes, as if to dare us to find fault with her.

"How had we been this long time? Did we like Stronbuy? It seemed a strange craze for us to go

there. How could two fine gentlemen like us manage to exist in such a den? She had been there once herself with Stronbuy's sister, and it seemed not much better than a rat's hole. Did we take our dinner on our knees? Yes; she was living now at Tostary, and her uncle, she was certain, would call and make our acquaintance. And if he asked us, we were to be sure to come over. She had a great deal to say to us, and Tostary was so lonely that any visitors would be welcome," so she rattled on. The honourable Ted monopolised much of her attention, carrying on with her a deal of good-natured chaff, and when she left, which she did before dinner, he accompanied her down to the gate, and saw her mounted on her pony.

Our dinner-party was increased by Dr M'Audle, the parish minister, and our friend Toons, who had come over on what he called "pusiness."

Dr M'Audle greeted us warmly. He was glad to learn that we had come to the parish, and hoped to see a good deal of us. The doctor was a stout, portly man, with a countenance that testified to amiability, an eye that twinkled with humour, and a ruddy nose that spoke of generous living. He was much respected by all classes in the district. Being of a convivial disposition, his company was much sought after. He had a great fund of anecdote, and could play a good game at whist. As a preacher he was not held in such repute, at least he was by no

means regarded as a popular orator. His father and grandfather had been ministers before him, and he inherited from them not only a moderate competency of this world's goods, but also their manuscript sermons. Those of his flock who sat in the gallery of his church knew quite well by the colour of the paper whose sermon they were to get. If it was of a brown hue, it was the production of the grandfather, and was of a moral type, inculcating virtues such as temperance, charity, honesty, and the like, and warning against lying, stealing, drinking, and similar vices. If the colour of the document was yellow, it was one of his father's. This excellent divine had been a great evangelical light in his time, and all his sermons began with an allusion to the fall, and ended with an exhortation to three classes of hearers—the sinful, the converted, and those who were neither the one nor the other. If the sermon was the doctor's own, the paper on which it was written was moderately clean, and the discourse had a speculative cast about it, hinting at mysteries which the preacher felt to be a burden to his own spirit. On the whole, the people liked the grandfather's sermons best. This worthy man had been a minister in the Hebrides at the time of Dr Johnson's visit, and had entertained the great man in his manse. His sentences had a Johnsonian ring about them, and many of his sayings passed through the parish like current coin, such as: "Religion is an insurance against fire, for which honesty is the best

policy." "A wise man's tongue lies behind his heart, but a fool's heart lies behind his tongue." "He who slanders his neighbour is like one who spits at the sky—the sky is untouched, but the spittle comes back on the man's own face." His sermons were easily understood, and when he spoke of the sins of drunkenness, lying, and the like, each of the congregation enjoyed the luxury of thinking how applicable the pointed rebukes were to his neighbour's failings. The doctor was of a kindly disposition, and if his consolations in sickness were not so spiritual as those of Mr M'Kay, his port wine and beef-tea were, in their way, fully as much appreciated. When a young man he had been a great athlete, and could toss the *caber* and throw the hammer with any one in his father's parish. Many stories of his prowess in this respect still lingered among the people. When he entered the ministry, one of his old companions insolently struck him on the right cheek, saying he was sure, now he had become a minister, that he would turn the other. This the young preacher did. "My commission ends now," he said; and he gave the man such a thrashing as he never forgot. After he succeeded to the parish of Drissaig, an idle nobleman and his friends, who held a shooting in the neighbourhood, amused themselves by tying the tail of a cow to the church bell, which tolled all night to the terror of the inhabitants. The doctor went boldly to the offender, and gave him a piece of his mind. The

nobleman, astonished at what he called "the cheek of the highland parson," replied that it was well for him his coat was his protection. "It shall not be yours," said the irate doctor, laying hold of his Lordship in a grip of iron, that made him apologise. These stories of the doctor's prowess were very often repeated by the parishioners of Drissaig, and even those who did not attend his ministrations seemed proud of the parish having such a pastor.

With his brother, the Rev. Mr M'Kay, he was on friendly terms, ecclesiastically speaking. They conversed affably when they met on the high road, and having each of them two churches to supply, they did so alternately, that there might always be service in both ends of the parish. Of late they had been drawn together more closely by an assault that had been made on their common preserve. Mr Croker of Drumle, not satisfied with the labours of either of them, had brought a lay preacher into the parish. He was one of the "men," as they are called in Rossshire, and was taken from that northern county to evangelise at Drissaig. He attended neither church, but went about pretty much on his own hook, holding often his conventicles at canonical hours.

"I am told, Doctor," said the Squatter, "that Mr Croker's 'Man' is working hard among the people at Drissaig."

"A friend of mine," added Toons, "was saying

that you had a talk with him the other day yourself, Doctor."

"Hoot," said the Doctor; "poor body, I met him down on the shore. 'Fine day,' says I, 'you seem a stranger to these parts.'—'We are all pilgrims and strangers,' says he.—'Oh!' says I, 'you'll be the gentleman that is going about preaching among the people.'—'I am,' says he.—'And were you ever at the college?' says I.—'No,' says he, 'the Lord opened my mouth.'—'Indeed,' says I, 'there was a seemilar occurrence in the time of Balaam, but of late years it has not been so frequent.' A poor body, Mr Farquhar, just a poor body. I asked him to take a refreshment, and he declined my offer; think of that! but I'm told, Toons, my friend Mr M'Kay is very hot upon him."

"Deed," said Toons, "he's been on him these three Sabbaths. I don't think he's been so put about since yon time he was preaching at Ledaig. You'll mind it, Doctor."

"What was it?" said the Doctor, looking innocently at Toons, but with a wink at the rest of the company.

"Oh! I thought every one knew of it. He was preaching at Ledaig, and he found on the Bible a note requesting the prayers of the congregation for a man who had lost his wife, and he prayed very fervently indeed; but when he came out he found the line was a year old, and the man was in the kirk that

very day with his new wife for the first time. He was greatly put about, the minister; but I'm thinking this 'man' vexes him even worse. It's a thorn in his flesh, he says, 'like what Paul had.'"

"I hope," said the doctor, "it will do him as much good as Paul's did to him. Perhaps the 'man' will call some day at Stronbuy. He called on our friend at Reudle, when Achintarive was with him. The two fellows enticed him into the parlour, and the one sang English comic songs, and the other Gaelic, to him for an hour. They nearly drove the poor man mad, and when he came out, old Sarah the housekeeper went at him with her broom and drove him off the premises. Speaking of our friend at Reudle, it is a most unfortunate affair this between him and Miss M'Lucas. He is a most excellent fellow. I'm told Mr M'Rory, his parish minister, wishes him to become an elder."

"If he is excellent," said Mrs Farquhar, "I tell you she is even better. Not to speak of the family she is of—as good blood in her veins as any in the north. Wasn't her mother one of the M'Farlanes, and——"

"True, true," said the doctor, evidently alarmed at the genealogical references, for when they began it was hard to say when they would stop; "the lassie is as good as gold. Her uncle is greatly taken up with her, and she is to marry into the peerage and what not. I think myself, however, she would have

kept by Mr Robert if he hadn't been, as they say in this part of the country, 'so backward about coming forward.' I'm sure of this, she is as fond of him as ever."

"I'm afraid," said Mrs Farquhar, "you are no judge of a lady's mind, doctor: it stands to reason, and you a bachelor, the more shame to you."

"He is a miserable creature, the uncle, whatever," continued the doctor. "I was over at him the other day for a subscription about the painting of the kirk. I got a little from him, evidently with a grudge, and when I said that Mr M'Lean of Maolachy had given me twice the amount, though he was a much smaller heritor in the parish,—'So he should,' said he, 'M'Lean goes twice as much to the church as I do.' I don't think I'll go near the fellow again. Didn't he actually tell me that he could get a better sermon for a penny than the Government gives me six pounds for preaching. What," said the doctor indignantly, "can be expected of a man like that? It's when I meet the like of him I feel sure there must be a hot place ready for them somewhere."

"Well," said Mrs Farquhar, "you may say what you like about Tostary himself, but I don't know anyone that's worthy of *her*."

"I wouldn't say that exactly," said the doctor, with a twinkle, drawing himself up. "I'm not so young a man as I was—still——"

"You! you!" said the lady.

"Do not be alarmed," said the divine, "I know too many married people to make me change my condition hurriedly. He was a wise man, my grandfather. One of his people came to him once to ask him whether he should marry or remain a bachelor. He took a week to consider the question, and then replied, 'Whichever you do you'll be sure to repent it.' But it is late, and as I have a good walk before me, I must take the road."

Ted and I walked with the minister to the junction of the Drissaig road, with the path leading to Stronbuy. In the dusk of the summer evening a strange-looking man slouched by. He had on an old Inverness cape, and wore a brown wig with a shabby wide-awake over it. The doctor stepped aside. "That's the 'man,'" said he.

After we parted—the factor leading the way down the hill above Stronbuy, I had some conversation with the honourable Mr Ted about Miss M'Lucas.

"You seemed very attentive," I said, sarcastically.

"Very well," replied he, "I don't see, now that it is all up with Bob, why I mayn't have a chance. You heard what old M'Audie said about the peerage. Amn't I the son of a live lord? Tostary would be a rare place to live at. I'm told the shooting is excellent, and we might have lots of fellows down, you know."

He kept up this talk till a late hour, notwithstand

ing my remonstrances; the more I said to him the greater joke he seemed to think his project.

"Here's to my success," he said, holding up his toddy tumbler.

"What, you won't drink it? Then, old fellow, I'll give you a shilling to tell me what article of clothing this represents. Give it up? Well, then, a night-cap."

So ended our "Twelfth."

## CHAPTER IV.

### LAIRDS AND LAND-LAWS.

THE weather was glorious. No summer like this had been known in these regions almost within the memory of man. It was not, however, very favourable for fishing, and the river was almost—except in its deep, black pools—without a drop of water. We tried it, occasionally, with little success beyond a few black trout. The factor told wonderful tales of the salmon he had seen killed in his time, but we listened to him incredulously. It seemed impossible for salmon or sea-trout ever to come from Drissaig up that driblet. One evening Ted caught with worm an enormous eel, which he coiled up in his basket and sent into the kitchen. In a short time afterwards we heard great screams coming from that apartment. The eel is regarded with detestation by the Highlanders, who on no account whatever can be persuaded either to cook or eat them. When big Kate saw the monster moving on the kitchen table when she turned up the basket, she fled in terror.

The shooting was better than the fishing, and we made occasionally a mixed bag, which is the

pleasantest of all. A hare or two, a couple of brace of grouse, a black cock, a few snipe, and perhaps a wild duck were generally brought in. And on the other side of the glen any number of rabbits could be got among the loose stones. Time, therefore, did not hang very heavily on our hands.

About a week after the Twelfth the post brought a letter from Mr M'Lucas of Tostary. It was sealed with a huge coat-of-arms, and addressed to the Hon. Mr O'Halloran. Mr M'Lucas trusted that, on account of his advanced age, we would excuse him calling for us, and hoped Mr O'Halloran and his friend would come over to Tostary the next day, which was a Thursday, when he would be glad to make our acquaintance. And we could spend a few days, which he would do his best to make pass as pleasantly as possible.

We had made an appointment to meet Bob at the east end of Loch Feeshnish on Saturday for a long day's fishing, and he had promised to spend Sunday with us at Stronbuy; and I was certainly surprised when Ted announced at once his intention to accept the Tostary invitation.

"It's too good a chance, old boy," said he; "and if you don't care about going, you can keep the appointment with Bob at the loch."

"I certainly," I replied, "don't mean to go, and neither, I think, should you."

"All right, we won't quarrel about it. I expect

to get some jolly shooting from old Tostary, and then—

> 'Love, love, laddie, love is like a dissiness,
> Wilna' let a puir boddie gang about his bisiness!'"

Accordingly, on Thursday afternoon, the honourable gentleman got himself and his portmanteau stowed away into Stronbuy's carriage on the other side of the river, and, with the factor as charioteer, took himself off to Tostary. The factor came back at dusk on Friday, and reported himself ready to go with me next day to Loch Feeshnish. He had told Dougal More, who looked after Stronbuy's boat, to have her down at the east end of the loch. The weather was very dry, but he thought if there was a breeze from the west we might do something. Well, he would take a dram, as he had got nothing but beer over at Tostary. It was but a weakly drink, and did not suit the stomach of Highlanders, but Tostary found it cheaper than whisky.

The factor and I reached the east end of Loch Feeshnish about nine o'clock next morning, and found Bob engaged in amiable converse with Dougal More, to whom he introduced me with great formality. "Allow me to introduce you, my dear friend, to Dougal More, Admiral of Loch Feeshnish. He is a man of ancient lineage. His grandfather ministered to the wants of the gallant Prince Charlie, and though he might have got £50,000 by giving information to

the Hanoverian Government, he yet scorned the infamous bribe. Further, Dougal also is an adherent of the ancient faith of Scotland, being vulgarly what is called a Papist, but he is not bigoted. Oh no! he will minister kindly to the wants of staunch Protestants like ourselves by pulling all day the heavy oar. He will also take from our hands the pledge of friendship; so if you have your flask at hand, you may tender to him the cheerful dram."

"Lord sake, Mr Taylor," said Dougal, "ye jest beat all for nonsense that I ever seed. No but I wouldna be the waur of a dram, too, for I've had a long walk this morning from Tostary, where I saw great goings on that perhaps you wadna altogether approve of."

"What did you see, my valiant Dougal, son of the brave?" said Bob.

"Well, then, I went over there early for a piece of rope for the boat. Ye see the old rope she hed was ferry rotten, and when I was passing the house there was great company there on the green. There was the Toternish people, and the young ladies from Frackersaig, and Miss M'Lucas herself and yon man Park from Wabton, and the young gentleman from Stronbuy was helping to carry baskets. They were going for a nic-pic, I was told. Isn't it curious the liking the shentry hes for taking their dinner outside the house on the bare ground?"

"Did you hear," said I, "where they were going?"

"A lad told me as was passing that they were going down to the shore to Davie Boyle's the fisher, and he was to catch a salmont and they were to make a fire themselves and cook it and eat it sitting on the rocks. I'm thinking the Wabton man will hev no chance with yon friend of yours, for they tell me he's a lord's son, and M'Lucas is wonderful taken up with the great."

This hint of Ted being a possible rival of his seemed to tickle Bob immensely, and, while we were pulling against the breeze so as to let the boat drift quietly back, he was very uproarious.

"My well beloved Dougal, votary of the scarlet woman that sitteth upon seven hills, I will sing to thee a song—*a leetle chanson.*

"Nathan Nobb,
Oh what a job,
Always walked on his head;
His mother would sob
To his brother Bob,
And his father took to his bed."

"Lordsake, sich a daft laddie!" ejaculated Dougal, but the factor listened as if to a sermon.

"They made him a boot,
His head to suit;
But a horrible thing must be said,
His hair took root
And began to shoot,
One day in the garden bed!"

"Could Ossian, O Dougal, born of a noble ancestry! conceive any sentiment so glorious as that?"

"Well, Mr Taylor, by your leave," said Dougal, "we came out here, not to sing of Nathan Nobbs, nor Hobbs, but to fish, and if you want any you had petter begin when I put the poat round on the wind."

The only way to get anything in such dry, clear weather was to allow the boat to drift quietly down, while one of us cast from the stern, and the other from the bow of the boat. We did not catch many trout, but those we got were of good quality, and by lunch time we had between us a couple of dozen. We pulled the boat to the end of a little pier and tied her up, while we took our sandwiches.

Dougal and the factor also got their "piece," and a good dram thereafter. While we were taking a quiet smoke before beginning our work again, I took occasion to make some enquiries of Dougal regarding the people in the neighbourhood.

"Are there any great families about here, Dougal?"

"Is it great families, Mr Gunter? deed there is that, there is Lachlan at Stigarsta has fourteen, and M'Comas down Drissaig way has twelve, and I myself has ten—five living and five in Kilsnorey kirkyaird."

"Toot, Dougal; it's great families in the way of station the gentleman is meaning," said the factor.

"Oh ay, I see; well then, we have his Lordship over the hull there, a ferry ceevil quiet man he is, and

there's the member of parliament, and . . . we have a cousin of Mr Gledstane?"

"Gracious!" said the factor.

"What I mean, Dougal, is gentlemen holding property, what you call lairds; are there many great landholders about here?"

"Too many, sir—far too many. I mind when there was one hundred families all along this loch side, decent quiet living people, and now there isn't a living soul; nothing but the green places where their houses were; nothing but sheep for the shentry. You'll hev heard maybe of Duncan Ban, and the song he put out about the foxes."

"Give us it, Dougal," said I; and the old highlandman, as we pulled out from the shore, sang many verses of a song, of which I give a few lines from a translation—*

"Ho! Ho! Ho the foxes,
Would there were more of them;
I'd give heavy gold,
For a hundred score of them.

My blessing with the foxes dwell,
For that they hunt the sheep so well!

Ill fa' the sheep, a grey-faced nation,
That swept our hills with desolation.

Who made the bonnie green glens clear,
And acres scarce and houses dear;

* "Language and Literature of the Highlands of Scotland," by Professor Blackie.

Where we were reared and gladly grew,
And lived to kin and country true?

Who bared the houses to the wind,
When hearths were warm and hearts were kind?

He earns from me no kindly will,
Who harms the fox upon the hill.

And may the young cubs prosper well,
Where snug in rocky holes they dwell.

And if my prayer with Heaven prevail,
No trap shall grip their bushy tail!

And may they live on tasteful food,
And die as wise old foxes should.

"Ho! Ho! the foxes," &c.

The old fellow shouted his praises of Reynard with great spirit, keeping time with his feet on the bottom of the boat, and the factor helped him with the chorus; even Bob and myself were inspirited to join in the Ho! Ho! and the echoes rang as if the ghosts of departed Celts were shouting for vengeance.

"Ay," said Dougal, sadly; "it's in the Cowgate of Edinburgh and in the closes of Glasgow they and their families is now that was here. The day was when you could have got hundreds of soldiers for the army in this land, and now there isn't one. I mind my grandfather, with his father, was out with Prince Charlie, and he told me many's the time of the fine soldiers would go with the chief. It's bad laws, sir, put them out."

"Ay," said the factor, "just bad laws."

"Ye see," said Dougal, "in the old time the land belonged to the people like, but they trusted the chief, and finally he got the land as his own, and sold it to get money to spend in London and be the big man, and them as came after him didn't care but to make what they could, and they cleared off the poor people in hundreds and put sheep in their place."

"But Dougal, this country never could have kept the people, and aren't those of them that left it better off than they were starving on little patches of land."

"Ay, that's what some says; but the people were comfortable enough, and they had the fishings in the sea, and the shearing in the South to help them; there wasn't happier people in Scotland nor them that was turned away. It was base laws put them out."

"Ay," responded the factor, like a parish clerk, "just base laws."

"And it's but poor meeserable lairds is here now compared with the old gentry. No but some of them is good too. There's Troternish and Mr Short, and there was Mr Struan — God rest his soul," said Dougal, crossing himself, "he was of the good kind —but there's some doesn't even come near the place, and give all power to factors, who is ferry hard often on the people."

"Descendant of the hero of Culloden, why don't you shoot them?" said Bob.

"Na, Mr Bob, the highlandman keeps his soul clean of the blood of any man. No but we are tried often enough. You'll know what the querns is?"

"It's the stones the people has for grinding the corn," explained the factor.

"Well, then, you won't perhaps believe it, but there was one of these big men put up a mill over at Strone, and, in course, the people wouldn't go to it, because they liked their own way; and what did he do, but went round and took away all the querns, two or three hundred of them, from the poor people, to make them go to his mill. Is there worse than that in Ireland at the present time?"

"That was for their good," said Bob.

"Maybe," replied he, "put there's M'Lucas."

"Oh," said Bob, "take care what you say of him, Dougal, I love him much."

"Well, Mr Taylor, you know what he is, and I'll say nothing about him, but yon friend of his, Park from Wabton, that is with him, I was pulling him on the loch last week. I pelieve he would rake the bad place for a sixpence."

"He will probably," said Bob, with a gloom on his countenance, "yet get ample opportunity for the exercise of his ability in that direction."

"Do you know, shentlemen, there's one thing surprises me greatly,—when a man gets a bit of land, he gets so proud and big, and thinks himself so wise. I think a man may be just as wise and just as good, too,

as them, though, like me, he hesn't enough ground to sod a lark, or a sixpence to jingle on a tombstone. I think myself the yearth they get takes their brains, and makes them often very stupid, they're of the 'yearth yearthly,' as the word says."

"Ah, most excellent Dougal," said Bob, "you are no philosopher, you have never read of the 'earth hunger of humanity.'

"It's oh! for a patch of land,
It's oh! for a patch of land,
Of all the blessings tongue can name,
There's none like a patch of land.

"It brings the rent for the farm,
It brings the sheep from the pen,
It brings the peats, it brings the coals,
It brings e'en the midden hen.
It's oh! for a patch of land."

"Well! well! that would be a fine song for M'Lucas and some of them, though it's little of their land they will want by and bye. Dod, it was old Flora, the hawker, sorted them over at Tommindoun, when M'Lucas and some more of them was on the bench. She was taken up, you know, for taking some little thing by mistake."

"Stealing, in fact," I said.

"Well, you may call it by that name, but it was only a few neeps no man could miss. She was ferry bold, Flora, and, says she, 'there's no law in the country for bringing me here.'

"'Oh,' says Tostary, quite big, "you better come up on the bench, and tell us what the law is.' Flora looks up, and, says she, 'there's too many old women up there already.' There was a great laugh in the court, but, oh, M'Lucas was angry, 'three weeks,' says he, 'with hard labour.'"

"Hero of a hundred fights," said Bob, "there is a much better story than that about our excellent unpaid magistracy. Last winter there, an Irish tramp was had up before them for something or other. 'What's your profession?' said the chairman. 'A sailor, your worship.' 'I don't believe,' said he of brief authority, 'you were ever at sea in your life.' 'Och,' replied the sailor, 'an does yer hanner think I came to this island in a cairt?'"

While this desultory conversation was proceeding, we were fishing away busily, but making little of our labours. The water fell dead calm, and it was of little use to continue. We had the satisfaction of seeing a most glorious sunset. The far-off end of the loch appeared like a sheet of silver, which the clouds seemed to touch. The sky was of fiery purple, then this gradually gave place to pale yellow light, with black bars of cloud stretched across it.

"There's a good day coming to-morrow," said Dougal, "I had better be putting you on shore, shentlemen, as I have to pull the boat up to the west end of the loch."

We accordingly landed, put up our rods, and

counted our trout, only three dozen in all, but we had a most enjoyable day. Then came "deoch-an-dorrus," and by the time we were up the hill, we saw Dougal's boat a far-away speck in the fading light. I induced Bob Taylor to come over and keep me company in my loneliness. As we were stepping along, we talked about the Highland clearings and the land question, of which Dougal had given us his views. "How do you account for it, Bob, that these Celts take their eviction so quietly, and the Irish, who belong to the same race, set the law at defiance, and shoot the landlords down? I fancy it is the difference in religion."

"I thought so at one time too, but I have changed my mind," said Bob. "I think the reason is that they are not the same race now. All along this west coast the Norsemen had settlements; and, I think, it is the admixture of the Scandinavian blood that has made the Scotch Celt so different from his Irish cousin. It is all romance this talk about peasant population. Look at France, where I stayed, you know, for some time last summer. There, owing to the subdivision of property, the peasants have farms apiece. Some of one or two acres, and what slavery their life is! It is toil and drudgery without end, to be able to live. They have no time for culture,—nothing to help them to self-improvement. They are veritable beasts of burden. Here the case would be even worse than in France, for the soil is poor, and the climate bad. I sympathise with the feelings of the

people clinging to the old land, but I am convinced that emigration is the only way really to help them. In America and Australia their labour will bring them a good return, and, at least, a fair share of the comforts of life. There is old Sarah's nephew out in Canada west, where a lot of people from here went some time ago. He writes home that nothing in the world would make him come back. He has to work hard, but his work is remunerative, and he never knows what it is to want."

"All the same," I said, "eviction in the Highlands has often been carried too far—absent proprietors are a curse to the country, and some of their dealings with the people have been marked by great cruelty. I often feel sad when I think of the fate of the poor Celt."

"Yes," sung Bob, as we reached Stronbuy.

"From the dim sheiling on the misty island,
Mountains divide us and a world of seas,
But still our hearts are true, our hearts are Highland,
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides."

## CHAPTER V.

### CELTIC THEOLOGY.

NEXT day, Sunday, was, as Dougal had prophesied, a beautiful day. Not a cloud in the sky, which was as blue as it is on the shores of the Mediterranean. Looking across the glen, the smoke from the two farm-houses of Toons and Ballachantui was ascending straight up; on the far-off skyline stood the horses of both farms, released from their labours and enjoying their Sabbath rest; and the black cattle stood in the pools of the river looking meditative and busily switching their tails; not a soul seemed to be moving about. There was deep peace upon everything. The only thing that broke the silence was the crow of the grouse. An old cock pitched on a hillock near me, and set up a most lusty cry of defiance to his rivals all over the moor. I watched him quietly for some time; at every crow he took a run round the hillock, and scraped his wings on the ground, somewhat after the fashion of the turkey cock. Seated on a boulder of grey granite before the door I was lazily watching his performance, and smoking my pipe, when the factor came slouching along, and, with his usual free-

dom,—for he had no reserve about him,—stretched himself full length on the heather near me, and became at once absorbed in gazing into the infinite. He might have been a Buddhist at his devotions, so absorbed did he appear in contemplation.

"I don't suppose you have much benefit of clergy up here," I said, after a time.

"Oh, well no, Sir; but the ministers are very attentive too. I mean my own minister, M'Kay, and Doctor M'Audle too."

"How often, now, do they look you up?"

"Well, let me see. There was the first 'lection of the school-board,—they both came to see me then; and then there was the second 'lection, they came again; and then was the parliament 'lection, that was another time. Oh yes, indeed, I canna complain; they are very attentive. I canna get often to the kirk mysel', but my wife aye goes."

"Why don't you?" I said.

"Oh! you see, there's them beasts from the other side is always crossing the burn. I do believe yon red bull of Ballachantui knows the Sabbath day as well as myself. I never go to the kirk but I find him over here when I come back; but to tell you God's truth, Mr Gunter, I have ferry little inducement to go to kirk. I dinna approve altogether of Mr M'Kay, and when he cam I didn't sign his call, ye see."

"What have you against him, factor?"

"Well, in the first place, his Gaelic is real bad. He comes from the Caithness side, and I canna understand him. Then he is awful long. They say he thinks so much of eternity that he pays no heed to time; but I don't know, he's awful wearisome whatever. Then he scatters terribly!"

"What do you mean?" I said.

"I mean he's like yon gun Stronbuy bought in France. Dod it sends the shot over half-a-mile. Now, I like a gun and a minister to shoot close myself. And M'Kay is an awful scattering man. He'd be on twenty things in the same sermon. Then he's an awful man for money. It's yon ostentation fund Sabbath after Sabbath."

"You mean Sustentation, I suppose?"

"Something of that kind. Yon boy of mine was at the kirk the other day, and when he cam home I began to ask at him about the sermon; but not a thing could he remember but 'a collection, my friends, will now be made.' 'Deed, if it wasn't 'the principle,' I would acti'lly go to M'Audle."

"You like him better?"

"Ou, aye; he has fine sermons whiles; when you hear M'Kay, it's like a dose of salts, it keeps grip, gripping you all over; but M'Audle some way makes you feel quite comfortable and warm inside, same as if you had a good dram; and then there isn't yon cry for money, money; but if you are going to the kirk, you had better be moving. It's a good piece of road

indeed. I don't think I will go myself to-day whatever."

On going into the house for Bob I found him sitting at the kitchen fire complaining of toothache.

"Old boy, I'm not going to hear M'Kay. If it was M'Audle's day, I don't know but I might go; but M'Kay is even worse than the toothache. Now, beloved spouse of the factor of Stronbuy, what would you advise me to do?"

"I dinna ken about the kirk," said Big Kate, "if it's on necessity or mercy you are staying out of it; but I think I could gif you something that would put your toothache away."

"Nymph of Stronbuy, what wouldst thou advise?"

"Well then, just fill your mouth with water, and sit upon the fire till it boils!"

On the road to Drissaig I overtook Ballachantui and Toons moving slowly along. Their wives had gone down to "the Gaelic" in the morning.

"Going to the kirk, I suppose, gentlemen?"

"Even so," said Ballachantui, "as the bard says in the Gaelic—

> 'Some goes to church just for a walk,
> Some go there to laugh and talk;
> Some go there the time to spend,
> Some go there to meet a friend;
> Some go there for speculation,
> Some go there for observation;
> Some go there to dose and nod,
> It's few goes there to worship God.'"

"I'm going there to meet a friend, whatever, about a business we hed at the Slasach market, and I hev no doubt Toons is going there to dose and nod; for he sleeps just as sound as old M'Racken, that's dead, used to do under Mr M'Rory, over at Tobersnorey."

"Ay," said Toons, "I heard a man say that one day a dog began to bark in the kirk. 'Put out that dog,' says M'Rory, 'or else he'll be sure to waken the laird.' He's a ferry jokey man, Mr M'Rory, and he didna like Mr M'Racken at all. I'm told he gets on with the young laird much petter."

The Free Kirk of Drissaig stood quite on the sea shore, and in stormy weather the windows were well washed by the spray of the waves. It was probably the only cleaning they ever got. The whole building was in a dilapidated condition. The woodwork was unpainted; many of the window panes were stuffed with old rags, and holes were plentiful in the ceiling, where the plaster had fallen down with damp. The state of the church was in every way a contrast to that of the manse, which was a snug villa built in the style so common in the suburbs of a city—with bow windows and many gables.

The Reverend Mr M'Kay was a raw-boned, pale-faced, red-headed man, who had studied for the church late in life. He was no great favourite with his flock, for the reasons so lucidly stated by the factor, and it was his remissness in visitation that had induced Mr Croker, a large Free Church proprietor,

to let slip 'the man' upon him. If he conserved his energies during the week, he fully expended them on Sunday. His oratory, if not very dignified, was vehement; and his sermons, if full of grotesqueness, were always very pointed. Even those who did not pretend to understand him, gave him the credit of being a profound thinker, and often wished that he would use his brains less and his shoe leather more. In all things he contrasted unfavourably with Mr Shaw, the Free Church minister of the neighbouring parish.

The service was of the slightest kind. There was no reading of the Scriptures. A single psalm droned out by the schoolmaster in a sleepy fashion. There was no Lord's Prayer, which the stranger in an unfamiliar church so often feels to be a bond between him and his fellow-worshippers, of whatever creed. Indeed, the only prayer consisted in a sort of colloquial dialogue, to which no one in the church seemed to listen. Toons, who was beside me, jingled money in his pocket, and Ballachantui stared out of the window as if looking out for a ship sailing up the loch. The sermon was delivered without the "paper," and was, according to the factor's simile, very scattered. It was, however, given with such energy that it was impossible not to listen. The preacher at times jerked himself over the edge of the pulpit, and stretched his clenched fists toward his congregation as if he would like to drum his exposition into the heads of his hearers by physical force. His text was the story of

the three men who excused themselves from following Christ. "The first hired a farm, and must needs go to see it. Oh, my friends, what was he but a fool? Oh, yes! If he had not been a fool he would have seen it pefore he had paid his money for it. The second had purchased a yoke of oxen, that's the beasts they put into the plough in eastern lands—a yoke of oxen. Oh, yes! not like the ponies we use in our country. Oh, no! a yoke of oxen! Aye, he was a fool too! Was he not a fool? Is there any one here, rich or poor, who will say he was not? *A fool!* just a fool! And why was he a fool? Was he not a fool that didn't try them before he bought them? Is there any one here will be at the Slasach market this very week and will buy there a horse and him not try just how he will go, or whether his knees is sound, or his wind is good? Oh, no! And the third man was just married, and said at once that he would not come. He would not come he said, and he said it without making any pretence about it whatever. He said it in a determined manner—he said it in a way that no one could mistake him. He put it beyond all possible doubt; he would not come! He would not come. Was not he a fool? Is there anyone will say he was not a fool? and why was he a fool? Why must he be called a fool for ever? Was he not a fool because he showed that one woman had more power in her to draw him away than a yoke of oxen did the other man? Ay,

he was a fool indeed!" After this stage of the discourse had been reached, the "shot" began to scatter very widely. There were unmistakeable references to Mr Croker's "man" and to one of his meetings, at which some present had assisted. "Unsound doctrine in our day had more strength even than a yoke of oxen to draw away men from the truth; ay, even a yoke of oxen. There were some here had been dragged away at the tails of these beasts; ay, even at the tail of one who, like the wild boar of the wood, had been breaking into the vineyard to devour the rich clusters of the grapes. Had they not one in their midst ever going about like the 'Lion of the tribe of Judah!' seeking whom he might devour." From this the transition was easy to a heresy case, which was distracting the Free Church on a question of Biblical Criticism. This was handled at great length, and at the end of an hour and a half, the sermon was wound up with a description of future misery, which glowed like a fiery sunset on a November day. "Some were saying there was no devil. Ah, they will find out ferry soon! Amen." With this fearful ejaculation the discourse closed, and in a few minutes more the congregation were out on the grass discussing, after the manner of highlanders, the preachment to which they had listened.

"That's what I calls a feenished discourse," said Toons; "he was in real good tune the day."

"Even so," said Ballachantui; "a feenished dis-

course! I was ferry glad when it was done, whatever. The Doctor is the poy for me."

"Now, good man," said his wife, who had a great leaning to the Free Kirk, which was only repressed by the strong hand of her husband, "I am sure yon at the close was ferry fine."

"Och," replied her husband; "my good woman, I thought it was the clothes of the congregation you were thinking on."

"Ah! well, there was some there was ferry ridiculous; did you see these lassies from Stigarsta with the gum-flowers in their bonnets? Set them up indeed! I would think hats was good enough for them."

"Well!" said Toons, "I heard all the folks coming out, saying it was a fine sermon. It was a weighty discoorse, whatever."

"Heavy, you mean," said Ballachantui.

"Well then, isn't the gold heavy," said Toons.

"Yes," said Ballanchantui; "but gold is bright too, and that's more than he is. Dod, he's as great a man for brimstone as that minister in Glasgow, that the story was going about."

"What was that?" I enquired.

"There was a skipper cam to the Broomielaw one time with a cargo of brimstone, and he was looking for some one to take it off his hands; so they told him there was a great dealer on the south side of the river, of the name of Anderson. So the skipper goes to Anderson's house, and was shown

into a fine room with books all round it, and a minister comes in. 'Was your name Anderson?' says the skipper.

"'It is,' says the minister.

"'Well then, I've a fine cargo of sulphur and brimstone at the quay, and I'm told ye'r a great dealer in that article!'"

"It's a shame," said Mrs Ballachantui, "for you to be telling the shentleman your wicked stories upon the Lord's day. I'm wondering you're no feared for a shudgement. It's a pity you come to the kirk at all."

"Ay!" said Toons, "why do you go at all?"

"Why do I go?" said Ballachantui, "for various reasons, Toons. In the first place, I might pe in a worse place."

"Ay, that's true!"

"And in the second place, I think religion is a good thing for the country; next to the poliss there is nothing I pelieve keeps ignorant and wicked people from stealing sheep and so on, like religion.

"And in the third place, the kirk is a fine place for folks coming together, especially the lads and lasses in a country like this. They say you met your ain wife at the kirk first, Toons? In fact, I don't see how we could get on without the kirk at all, myself, even for this world, whether there was another or no; but it's a great pity meenisters do not make their kirks more entertaining, especially when we come so far to see them. We hevna even a bit tune on an

organ here, to keep up our speerits, nor a human hymn. Going to kirk in this country, is just like going to a wedding without a fiddle, and no a drop of drink on the table."

"You shouldna be speaking that way," said Toons. "It's a fine thing to belong to a pure church, and get the milk of the word in all its strength."

"Well, I hope you'll get fat on it, Toons. I dinna believe much in kirks myself. I think everybody takes to the kind of kirk suits his own constitootion best. There's some birds builds their nests ferry high up, and there's others builds them in the bush, and there's others builds them on the bare ground like the peewit. I'm thinking you of the Free Kirk belong to that kind—the peewit kind—and the Escopians to the kind that puts their nest higher; but I think myself it don't much matter."

This somewhat mixed metaphor seemed to impress the little group powerfully as we walked together up the glen, but I think the chief feeling was one of horror at sentiments they deemed to savour of rank infidelity. Ballachantui was regarded far and wide as a very free thinker, and sometimes hard things were said of him, but he was respected everywhere as an honest, upright man; and as he went regularly to kirk all unfavourable rumours raised against him always soon died away.

"I daresay, Toons, you and Mr Gunter will be after thinking me a wee in the infidel way, but I'm

ferry far from that, 'deed I tak great credit to myself that, after going to the kirk this forty year, I'm still a Christian. I'm sure, if my anchor hadna a good grip of the ground, I'd have been high and dry pefore now upon the shore. Did you just hear, Mr Gunter, what yon man was saying about the tevil ?"

"Wasna it grand," sighed his wife, "I thought just I was at the gate of heaven."

"Of the other place, you mean," said her spouse; "but if you was at the gate of heaven, it's a pity but ye'd slipped in ; ye'll maybe no get another chance in a hurry."

"It is strange," I said, interfering in the matrimonial dialogue, "what a fancy Scotch people have for the Devil. They seem to resent anything said against him as a personal insult. I sometimes think it is Burns' famous poem that has caused this feeling."

"Ay," said Ballachantui, "it's a fine song indeed, especially yon about being sorry for him 'cause he was in sich a dark hole. I mind reading it long ago, in my cousin's hoose in Glasgow. He hed what he ca'd a 'nicht wi' Burns.' There was a power of whiskey drank. But I will tell you my opeenion about the tevil, though maybe you will laugh at me, Mr Gunter, at the same time."

"No fear of that, my dear fellow. I would like to hear your opinion very much indeed."

"Well, then, I think langsyne, when the first people was on the yearth, they thought, being ignorant, that

everything was against them—the storms, and the lightning, and the rain, and so on—and they worshipped the evil being from whom these things comed, whom they called the tevil. But after a time, when they saw that some of these things they thought was bad was really for their good, then they cam to believe in a good Being, and worshipped Him, that is to say; and I'm thinking, when men come to see that everything is really for good, there will be no room for the tevil, and he'll have to flit: even now the ministers say he's chained, but by-and-by, I'm thinking, his chain will grow much shorter."

"Maybe, Ballachantui," interjected Toons grimly, "ye'll find it's long enough!"

"I was telling my views one day," continued Ballachantui, "to Dr M'Audle. 'What's the use,' says he, 'John, making such disputings about whether there is one tevil, when the tevils we know, especially inside of us, is so many.' He's a sensible man, the Doctor!"

We were now nearly opposite Stronbuy, when I heard behind the sound of a trotting pony.

"That's M'Lucas' lad," said Toons. "I saw him in the kirk. He was speaking to one of the lassies from Stigarsta when we came out. He's to be married, they're telling me, upon one of them."

Mr M'Lucas had brought me a letter from the Honourable Ted, pressing me to go over to Tostary next day, that M'Lucas was very anxious for me to

come. "This is a capital shop," the letter said, "and no end of fun."

On reaching Stronbuy, I showed the letter to Bob, who was smoking at the door. Contrary to my expectations, he advised me to go. "It's worth while," he said, "even to see the place—curious, Ted says nothing of the fancy ball at Frackersaig. They are all sure to be there from Tostary, and I will perhaps go myself. I've an invitation." After some further conversation, I agreed to go over to Tostary next day.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE HALLS OF TOSTARY.

THE road to Tostary, for the most part, is very uninteresting. After leaving Drissaig, it turns sharply off to the left along the sea shore, and then across a point or promontory through a dense waste copse; on the other side of this point is a deep ravine, which extends from the shore far up among the hills, called Glenbogary. It is a weird glen, and came naturally to be regarded by the people with a certain superstitious awe, as the haunt of invisible beings. Many supernatural visions had appeared in Glenbogary. A man had once been murdered not far away, and his spirit still wandered through the glen, and had been often seen. High rocks frowned on each side of the valley, and it was only at mid-day—and for a short time—that it was gladdened by a ray of sunshine. It might well have been taken by an artist as a fitting representation of the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The road to Tostary turned sharply down this glen, tending directly seawards, and following the course of a mountain stream that ran far down below the level of the highway. On nearing the sea the valley widened a little, and the

stream emptied itself into a little rocky bay. Immediately above this bay, on a bold headland looking right out to sea, stood Tostary Castle. It was by no means an imposing building. Originally it had been a fair-sized, square, unadorned block; but to this Mr M'Lucas had added two wings, a round tower, and a castellated porch. It presented, therefore, an immense mass of masonry to view. Its great feature, architecturally, was the number of windows on the side towards the sea; and it was a popular belief that the castle had a window for every day in the year. Standing as it did on an elevated position, it was seen a great way out from land, and vessels saw the gleam of its lighted windows very far away. "There was nothing," the factor said, as I drove up, "to break the wind but the chimney pots of New York." The view from the balcony between the house and the edge of the cliff on which it stood was very fine. In the distance could be seen the Skye hills, and nearer the serrated peaks of Rum, and the strangely-shaped Scuir of Egg. No vessel could pass by the main waterway that leads through the Hebrides without being seen from Tostary, and passengers by the northern steamers always enquired whose house it was from which the flag was generally flying, to tell that the owner was at home, and what insular magnate it was that dwelt there in lordly state. Only Southerners, ignorant of the pretensions of a Celt, could have

imagined so imposing a pile tenanted by any one except a nobleman of high degree.

The factor whipped his pony briskly up the steep incline that led to the doorway, and a footman in plush received me and ushered me into the drawing-room. It was a large square apartment, with four windows looking seawards, and one into Glenbogary. When I entered the room it was a scene of considerable confusion. A young man was jumping about dressed as a frog, another posed as a crusader; a young lady dressed as the Bride of Lammermoor sat in grand array in an arm-chair. Miss M'Lucas, who was standing in the room, came forward to welcome me, and presented me to her uncle, who was reading a newspaper in a corner. He was a wizened old man, wanting three fingers of the right hand, and walked with a decided limp. These physical imperfections he was generally supposed to have received in a conflict with the Australian Police, who once made a descent upon his gaming-table at Ballarat, where various nefarious practices were said to go on. He extended to me his stumpy hand, and expressed himself glad to see any friend of the Honourable Mr O'Halloran. He then limped back again to his corner and his newspaper.

"You find us in considerable confusion," said Miss M'Lucas. "We are all preparing for the fancy ball at Frackersaig. This fair bride, in common life is Miss Bell M'Lean of Maolachy; this scion of British

aristocracy of course you know; and this gallant crusader is Mr Publius Park of Wabton, whom I beg to present to you, and on whom, when you entered, I was just about to confer the honour of knighthood for his gallant conduct at the siege of Acre."

Mr Park was a thin man, with slight dark whiskers, sallow pasty face, and a somewhat hesitating utterance. This latter defect was said to hinder him from shining in parliamentary life, to which he at one time aspired. His public efforts were now confined to the local "boards" of his town, where he aired his oratory with great frequency. His manner was stiff and rigid, but exceedingly pompous, and he affected a fine English accent, through which appeared very conspicuously the strange *patois* of his native town. He was really very uncultured, but was fond of posing as a friend of art, spending large sums of money on paintings and statuary. He was presently engaged in a large speculation with Mr M'Lucas as to the import of Australian beef, and Mr M'Lucas was said to favour his pretensions to the hand of his niece.

"Kneel, Mr Park! kneel! and let me confer on thee the accolade," cried Miss M'Lucas.

Mr Park came forward with apparent reluctance, and a very sickly smile on his face, and with considerable difficulty got down upon his knees, while Miss M'Lucas stood over him with a pasteboard sword.

"It is necessary to bandage the eyes and hands of the candidate first," said the honourable Ted, who

went hopping about in the guise of a frog; and, after a vehement protest, Mr Park had to submit to this operation.

"Let me now," said Ted, who seemed to take a malicious delight in protracting the agonies of the kneeling candidate, "recite the office for the occasion."

He then began, in a low monotone, a chant, apparently from a book in his hand: "Hocus Pocus bravus knightus, Wabtonensis civitatus," and in the middle of his nonsensical rigmarole the dressing bell for dinner rang. Mr M'Lucas, who was punctual in all his movements, limped himself at once out of the room, the others slipped away also; the honourable Ted then ceased his chant, and having placed several chairs and stools in the immediate neighbourhood of Mr Park, vanished also, and I followed. In the hall were the conspirators, listening with intense delight to the objurgations of the postulant for knighthood as he groped his way barking his shins against the furniture, and making frantic efforts to release himself from the bandage round his eyes. The footman, after a few minutes, was sent in to give him liberty, but when he came out, every one had vanished up stairs. I was shown my room by Ted, who seemed to be familiar with every part of the house.

"This is a rare shop," said he, as he rushed away after ushering me into my apartment, "and I never

knew before what an advantage it is to be the son of a lord."

When I came down to the drawing-room, Miss M'Lucas introduced me to Mrs M'Tavish, an elderly lady, who nominally presided over the establishment. She came from the island of Barra, and was a distant cousin of the laird's. She was of a most placid disposition, and passed a great part of her time in peaceful slumbers by the fire. In addition to the members of the party whom I had already seen, there were two gentlemen staying in the house, Mr Paul and Mr Trant. The former was a large Australian sheep-holder, who had made a large fortune, and the other was the inventor of a process by which fresh meat could be brought to this country from the antipodes. It was this business that brought him to Tostary. He was a handsome manly looking fellow. There were also two pleasant young girls from Frackersaig with their mother. They had just finished their education in Edinburgh, and the fancy ball was to be given in honour of their return home.

The Honourable Ted took down Miss M'Lucas, who sat at the head of the table; Mr Publius Park followed with Miss Jane Frackersaig, Mr Trant with Miss M'Lean Mackay, and Mr Paul with Miss Mary Frackersaig. I took down Mrs M'Tavish, and Mr M'Lucas brought up the rear with the lady of Frackersaig.

Dinner was served in a room, the walls of which

were covered with portraits supposed to represent the M'Lucas ancestry. There was a judge in his ermine, a bishop in lawn sleeves, several officers, and many ladies in fantastic costumes. These portraits were entirely mythical, but the laird either pretended to believe, or had perhaps got himself to believe in their originality. In his conversation he would sometimes appeal to the figures on the wall, with a sweep of his mutilated hand, as "them who went pefore me."

After the usual remarks about the weather, the conversation soon drifted to the subject of the Frackersaig ball, at which most of those at the table were to be present.

"I don't consider," said Miss Frackersaig, "that a crusader's costume is altogether, do you know, appropriate, Mr Park. Wouldn't a Wabton shawl suit you better?"

"I think so too, Jane," said Miss M'Lucas, smiling sweetly towards him.

"Well, mem," said Park, with wonderful affability, considering the ordeal he had lately come through, "it shall be as you say; though it was an artist lad from our toun sent me the costoom from Lundon. The shawl trade is a fine industry, and I am happy to say is very brisk at present. Have you ever visited Wabton, Miss Jane? It's a fine place Wabton."

"I've often passed it in the train, but never stayed

there," replied Miss Jane. "What castellated building is that near the railway station?"

"That imposing pile is the jail, mem. I am one of the visiting justices, and it is efficiently supplied with every modern improvement. Do you know, I was a leading member of the committee that selected the new heating apparatus and also the new gallows. It's a fine place Wabton."

"It doesn't look very attractive, but I daresay it is better than it looks. It's from there the thread comes, isn't it?

"Yes, mem; and there are other most important industries there; one is the starch which is used, mem, in the Queen's very laundry. I saw the certificate from the head wuman at Windsor. And there are bricks made there, famous over the whole Europe, besides that nutritious food, corn flour. It's a fine place Wabton."

Here Mr Trant's conversation with Miss M'Lean began to overpower the exposition of Mr Park of the delights of the manufacturing town. He was growing eloquent, describing the grandeur of the scheme in which he was engaged, by which beef, and especially mutton, was to be brought to the homes of the working classes at one penny a pound.

"I'm ferry sorry to hear it," said Miss M'Lean, who was a very lively girl, and spoke with a strong highland accent, which she rather affected.

"I thought you would be interested in my project," said Trant, in a tone of amazement.

"No, I am not," said she decidedly. "My father has four thousand sheep over at Maolachy, and is it a beggar you would want to make him? and me to be singing songs on the streets for my daily bread? I do hope your ice will all melt in the Red Sea, and it's overboard they will have to throw your beef and muttons."

"I must do myself the honour," said Trant, "of waiting upon your father and enlisting his sympathy. I feel sure when he hears the details he will become one of our shareholders, and so compensate himself for any possible loss he may sustain from the success of our great scheme."

"'Deed and it's the trouble you may save yourself of explaining to him. I'm afraid it's the way the book-hawker found my old aunt at Hogary there, you would find him."

"What was that, Miss M'Lean?" said Paul.

"Well, you know, it's troubled with men selling books my aunt, Miss M'Neil, was. One after another came, for her cottage is quite close to the road, with their prospectuses and so on. At last it was to get quite tired of them she did; and one day, when she saw one coming up from the gate, she sat in the big chair in the parlour, with a slate near her. So it's to knock at the door he did; and at last he came into the room. 'I hope I do not intrude,' says he. She

smiled, and never said a word. Then he opened up his portfolio, and told about his interesting work about Palestine, and so on; and still she smiled, without uttering a syllable. At last, when he was fairly run out, she took her slate, and wrote upon it, 'I'm defe and dumb.' She is a ferry smart woman, Aunt Sophy; no book-canvasser has gone near her since."

Mr Trant was silent for a while, apparently thinking over his possible reception at Maolachy, and the voice of Publius Park again became predominant.

"In Wabton, we have admirable institutions, mem. There is a poor-house, with two hundred beds. I often slip in myself and taste the soup; and the porridge is made of the best oatmeal. It's a fine place Wabton."

"Indeed," sighed Miss Jane wearily.

"Yes, mem; and Provost Morrison has often said to me that he wondered I never entered the council; but I've always cherished the hope that some day I might perchance enter the British Senate itself. Our town is very advanced in politics; and I doubt not I might have a good chance with the electors. It's a pity, mem, you never were in Wabton. It's a fine place."

"I really wonder, Mr Park," said Miss M'Lucas, coming to the assistance of her friend, "that you could tear yourself away from so delightful a town. You must miss in this poor country many of those privileges to which you are accustomed."

"Indeed, mem," said Park, drawing himself up in his chair, and stiffening his back, which was a sure sign of gratification. "Indeed, mem, you may well say that. There's no U. P. kirk in this country. You may not be aware that I'm an elder in that admirable body. Doubtless you have read of the glorious voluntary controversy."

"Something connected with the French Revolution and Marie Antoinette, wasn't it?" said Jane Frackersaig, in a languid way.

"Oh dear me, not at all, mem, it's of most living and conspicuous interest; it's the burning question of our day. I made myself a speech. I said disestablishment is the——"

"You're quite right, Park," said old M'Lucas briskly, "I had actually to pay one pound the other day for putting old M'Audle's drains in order."

"Indeed, sir, you should not have done it," said Park. "I know what typhoid fever is; it is a very deadsome and noxious disease; and the faster these parish ministers disappear the better."

"Oh, shame! shame!" cried Miss M'Lucas. "I will not allow you to speak that way. Dr M'Audle is a dear old thing. Uncle, you must give him that bow window for his manse. I do wish he would ask me to marry him. I'm sure I would make him *so* comfortable."

By this time Mrs M'Tavish had finished her nap. She roused herself from her state of coma, and gave

the signal to the ladies to depart. After they left the conversation was of a strictly business character. The prospects of the new Australian Beef and Mutton Company, in which four of those present were deeply interested, were discussed at length; and after listening for a time to a description of a huge ice chamber which was to be constructed in the centre of a steamer, with a special apparatus for keeping up a current of air, Ted and I joined the ladies in the drawing-room.

The evening wore pleasantly to an end. The Frackersaig young ladies and Miss M'Lucas sang songs and played the piano; but perhaps the most striking performance of the evening, was the singing of a song of Tannahill, by Mr Publius Park. The effect upon the risible faculties of those present was indescribable, but the singer appeared to think he had acquitted himself with great credit.

"Is there any of your hyperborean songs," he said, "can compare with that? How very fine that sentiment is, 'the mavis sings fu' bonily.' Do you know, Wabton has produced many eminent poets, I myself once composed."

"I think, as it is late," interposed Miss M'Lucas, "we must leave Mr Park's poem till to-morrow."

"I shall be glad to hear it for one," said Ted, wickedly; "you have really given us a great treat, Mr Park."

"I'm glad you think so," said the singer, com-

placently; "and if you come to Wabton, I'll shew you a likeness of Tannahill, and I have also the Madonna de Cardanello, by Raphle himself."

"I thought," said I, "the Madonna de Cardanello was in the Pitti gallery at Florence."

"Yer mistaken then," said Park, frowning darkly upon me, "for I paid myself two hundred pounds for it. I intend to give a minute description of it in my lecture to-morrow."

I had heard of this coming lecture before, and on Sunday had noticed huge posters stuck upon the doors of the churches at Drissaig, which informed the public, that on Tuesday at six o'clock, a lecture would be delivered in the school-house, by Mr Publius Park, —subject: Art.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ENLIGHTENING THE NATIVES.

THE gong which stood in the hall roused us early in the morning from our slumbers, for Mr M'Lucas was a firm believer in those adages which inculcate the advantages to mind and body, of early rising, and the immeasurable prosperity likely to arise therefrom. He invariably began the day with family prayers, though few of the household, except himself, his niece, and the domestics, ever attended them. A procession of housemaids entered the dining-room punctually at eight o'clock, headed by the butler and footman carrying a long stool covered with green cloth, on which the servants sat during prayers. Mr M'Lucas limped, on their appearance, to a table, on which lay a huge bible, from which he read a psalm, in the same tone as that in which he commonly swore, and a person at a little distance might have imagined that he was imprecating curses on the head of everyone present. Afterwards, kneeling, he read a prayer from a book of family devotions, which ended, he closed the book with a snap, rose up quickly and told the butler to bring in breakfast, and to look d——d sharp about it. Why he should have con-

sidered it necessary to go through this performance day after day it is impossible to say. It was certainly as unspiritual a proceeding as could well be imagined, and could only be compared to the prayer-mill turned by a water stream, said to be used by some heathens.

"I should have been delighted, my worthy friend," said Publius Park, "to have taken part in your daily exercise. I am accustomed, from the position which I occupy, to engage in public devotions. Do you know, I once presided at a meeting——"

"Thank ye," snapped out M'Lucas, "I am ferry much obleeged to you, put I am accustomed to paadle me own canoe in matters speeritual and temporal both, as them (here came the usual sweep of the hand towards the portraits on the wall) who went before me."

Breakfast at Tostary was a desultory and unsocial meal—one person after another dropped in, went to the side-board, helped themselves, and rapidly satisfying their wants, went out. Mr M'Lucas bolted quickly a huge bowl of porridge and milk, and hobbled off to superintend some drainage operations, and keep his argus eye upon the workers till their dinner-time. It was in such matters that he showed the pettiness of his character. He trusted no one. He measured his milk, counted his eggs, sold his game, and even penetrated into the kitchen, to see that the cooking was carried on in no extravagant

fashion, particularly as regarded the consumption of butter.

While having a cigar with Mr Trant, outside on the cliff balcony, and listening to the details of his importation scheme, Mr Paul came up and joined us.

"I have just escaped from that awful bore, Park. It is just such as he make the town to which he belongs ridiculous. I come from the neighbourhood myself, and know the people of Wabton well. They are sharp, intelligent, and sensible; but there is a small class among them which Park well represents —men who manage to scrape together, or acquire by some sudden commercial rise, considerable fortune, and who immediately give themselves airs, and pretend to a wisdom and culture to which they have not the smallest pretensions."

"Isn't that the town," said Trant, "that old Murray, the head engineer of the vessel we came home in last, belonged to?"

"It is," Park replied, "and, like all Wabton people, he is rather fond of a joke against his town, particularly when it tells against the class to which this man belongs; you remember the story Murray gave us about old Bobus the M.P."

"Give us it," I said.

"Old Bobus was once in a train detained at the Wabton station, when a message boy came along, putting his head into the different carriages, and asking 'Is there a Wabton gentleman here?' 'What did

you say?' said Bobus. 'Is there a Wabton gentleman here?' said another boy. 'My boy,' replied the M.P., 'the Almighty never made such a person.' Old Murray used to tell the story with great glee. All the same, Bobus was very far wrong, for there are as true gentlemen in that town as in any in Scotland."

"What a blessing," said Trant, seizing the opportunity to mount his hobby, "it will be to towns like Wabton when we carry out our project. The working population will be able to purchase prime mutton at a penny the pound. What comfort this will bring to the homes of the poor! with their arms made sinewy by good wholesome food they will be able to carry on their industrial pursuits with an ardour which . . ."

"All right," cried Ted, who came racing round the house; "not the slightest doubt about it, Trant; but I want you to walk with me to Drissaig; and I've a message from Miss M'Lucas to deliver at Maolachy, so we will go that way."

"I shall be glad to go with you. I wish to explain to Mr M'Lean our prospectus."

"And also, I have no doubt, to converse with his amiable and accomplished daughter. She is really worth your looking after, Trant. She is an heiress, and I have no doubt old Mac will cut up better than your antipodian beef."

As I went into the hall to get my fishing-rod, for

I intended to go up the glen and try the stream, I met Miss M'Lucas.

"I'm afraid, Mr Gunter, there is some mischief brewing about this lecture by Mr Park. Your friend has been holding interviews with the butler and footman, and they can hardly carry away the breakfast things for laughing. All the servants have asked leave to go. And Mr O'Halloran sent the gamekeeper, Sandy, over to Drissaig to meet him there. I hope they won't go too far. Mr Park is stamping up and down his room reciting his address; you can hear him all over the house."

There is no better fun than fishing a little burn with bait on a bright summer day. Of course, on a dark day, with the river in flood, any one can fish; but in clear sunshine, to fill a basket takes all the skill and cunning you possess; and in the exercise of these, in my opinion, lies the essence of sport. When you come within yards of a little pool, you must crouch low down and get under the shelter of a big stone, and so throw the bait that it rolls gently down with the stream, or quietly sending the worm over a screen of hazel bushes, let it drop as if off an overhanging branch. I was on my knees stalking a little eddy of water, when I heard a shout from the road above me; and looking up, saw Bob Taylor watching my performance. I crossed the Bogary, as the stream was called, and went up to him.

"I'm going," he said, on my enquiring what brought

him here, "to Drissaig to meet Ted. Of course, you've heard of the splore about Park's lecture?"

Seeing I was in the dark about the "splore," as he called it, he would say no more, but that I would get good fun, not to speak of instruction, if I made my appearance at Drissaig that evening.

"Now, you fellows," I said, "had better take care; there's such a thing, you know, as carrying a joke too far."

"That's what the sheriff said to Flora the hawker, when she was up for stealing a hammer from the roadman. 'I only took it,' said she, 'for a joke.' 'How far did you carry it?" said the sheriff. 'Only about a mile, your hanner.' 'That's carrying a joke too far, Flora,' said he. But don't be afraid, old Solomon Sobersides; Ted and I will take good care of ourselves, only be you sure to be there." And with this advice, he departed.

We had an early dinner at Tostary to let us get away in time for the lecture. Old M'Lucas appeared at the table heated and in a shocking temper, which he showed by the use of very dreadful language. Mr Park ventured mildly to rebuke him.

"Really, my dear friend, if I might venture ——"

"Don't venture, then," said the savage M'Lucas, with a scowl and an inadmissible word.

I heard afterwards from Ted, who was in the highest spirits, the cause of this irritability on the part of our host. As he and Trant were crossing the

field near Tostary, in which the drainage operations were carried on, they observed M'Lucas depositing something in a hole in a dyke. He put a stone on the top of the wall to indicate the place, and went off to swear at the drainers. Ted and Trant crept up along the wall, and found that M'Lucas had placed in a cavity some eggs which he had gathered in the hen-house. They removed the mark on the top of the wall considerably further up, and retired to a distance to watch the result. In a little time they saw M'Lucas make straight for the mark and look for his eggs. He searched for a considerable time, evidently lost his temper, and began to pull down the dyke in his rage. He had thrown down several feet, to the amazement of the workmen, when the gong for dinner sounded, and he had to come home, as we have seen, in anything but an amiable mood.

"We all, with the exception of our host, mustered for the lecture. 'He was not going,' he said, 'to listen to Park's blethers.' Trant, Park and myself drove in a wagonette. Ted, Miss M'Lucas, Mrs M'Tavish, and some of the domestics, were in an omnibus. As we went along the road we passed many groups evidently bound on the same errand with ourselves, and round the schoolhouse quite a little crowd was collected, in the centre of which I could see Mr Bob. All the gamekeepers in the neighbourhood were there, and among them many faces with which I was familiar. Dougal Mor and the factor passed me arm in

arm, evidently leaning on one another for support. Ballachantui and Toons were laughing together uproariously. It was too evident that they had been assisting at a meeting at the Drissaig Inn. Mr Park was met by the schoolmaster, and taken into the schoolhouse, and we all followed. In a few minutes every part of the building was packed—Dr M'Audie, the Tostary party, Mr and Miss M'Lean, Maolachy, and a few others, were in front, while, in the back benches, might be discerned various celtic faces glowing under the influence of anticipation and whisky. I was on the point of rising, as the schoolmaster had requested me, to move that Dr M'Audie should take the chair, when Ballachantui got up, and hitching up his trousers, violently said"—

"Shentlemen and leedies—(loud cheers)—I pelieve it is right to have a chairman on this occasion—('right you are,' and much rapping of sticks). I am not ferry good at the speaking—('you're doing fine'). Etucation was not ferry goot in my time, put we're getting on—(hear, hear). There is a shentleman present is known to every one here—(loud applause, and 'he's a sholly goot fellow'). I mean Mr Taylor from Reudle. I move Mr Taylor take the share"—(loud applause).

"I shecond motion," said Toons, inarticulately. Bob, without waiting for any possible amendment, took the chair, and requested Mr Park to come

upon the platform. He then introduced him to the audience.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I beg to introduce to you Publius Park, Esquire, who, with that benignity which characterises all who belong to the lofty spheres of station and culture, has come here to-night to enlighten us—(ironical cries of heere, heere). He is a citizen of no mean city—(cries of 'thread, shawls, starch')—and may, at some future time, take his seat in the Parliament House of these realms. Mr Park will now give his lecture"—(cries of 'hooray' from the back benches).

Mr Park came forward amid tremendous cheering, which he evidently took as complimentary, he made a bow to his audience, and began:—"Ladies and gentlemen (hem), the subject of my lecture is Art. Sometime ago (hem) in addressing one of these evangelical meetings at which I frequently preside, I had occasion to observe, in the words of the poet Longfellow 'Ars longa vita brevis'—(cry of 'shame,' evidently from Ted, in a disguised voice, and 'that's pad Gaelic,' from the factor, accompanied by much rapping with sticks)—which means (hem) that art is long, but time is fleeting—(roars of laughter, caused by Bob holding up behind the lecturer a placard advertisement of the manufacture with which Mr Park's name was honourably connected). I say, ladies and gentlemen, Art is long—(cries of 'sho are you')—and time is fleeting. Ladies and gentlemen (hem), there

are various schools of art—the great Raffle, Michael Angeelo, and Lonarde Da Vichy—(cries of 'speak English'). I say there are various schools of art, perhaps the highest is that which has its representatives (hem) in our own day—the idylistic. If I might venture to make another quotation from that classic language which our admirable school system (hem) has made familiar to you all, *ars est cellery artam.* The highest art is to conceal art (roars of laughter caused by the elevation of the placard, and Mr Park smiled affably, evidently thinking he had said a funny thing), in that (hem) somewhat humorous expression (hem) is contained the principle of the idylistic school. It deals in the obscure (cries of Oh! Ho! led evidently by Ted). It dazzles by the brilliancy of its colouring the eye of the beholder. It makes dark (hem) by excessive brightness. Your own beautiful mountains—(heere, heere)—your brown moorlands—(heere, heere)—your lochs." Here Dougal Mor rose up with his fist stretched towards the lecturer, "What pusiness you to speak of lochs. I pull you whole day on Feeshnish for one shilling,"—great uproar. Whereupon Bob rose solemnly and said, "I must most reluctantly call upon our excellent friend the policeman to remove the gentleman whose interruption has been so unseemly." The man in blue thereupon seized Dougal Mor, who struggled violently, but was at last dragged out; in a minute or two his grinning countenance appeared at another door.

Silence being restored, the lecturer proceeded:—"I was about to say, when interrupted by that rude person, that your scenery (hem)—Caledonia stern and wild; the land of the mountain and the flood, the land of my sires—(much laughter caused by Bob leaning back in his chair in a sentimental attitude, with his hand on his heart)—furnish fitting subjects for the idylistic school. Nay, more, there are the scenes (hem) of your domestic life—(Oh! Ho! Ho!)—of which the poet has so beautifully said, 'From scenes like these old Scotia's glory springs'—(a verse of a popular Gaelic song 'Ho ro Morag' was here sung, with much tramping of feet).—Gentlemen—(cries of, and ladies)—give me a patient hearing. The great Mr Gladstone—(shouts of Bacconsfield)—Mr Gladstone—(Bacconsfield)—Mr Gladstone, I repeat"—(Bacconsfield, Bacconsfield). "I hope," said the chairman coming forward, "the lecturer will be good enough carefully to abstain from political allusions, for in the present state of political excitement it is impossible for me to say what may happen." The lecturer, somewhat put out by the interruption, had to refer to his manuscript, which he unfolded amid cries of 'No paper.' He then proceeded:—"What do we mean when we say a thing is beautiful? If we speak correct English—(cries, and Gaelic)—we do not mean simply that it pleases the eye. A plain face will sometimes please the eye more than a beautiful one, but we do not therefore call it beauti-

ful?—(cries of shame).—Doubtless the Esquimaw prefers the Mongolian type, and the European the Circasian; but will that make the Apollo hideous, or the Tartar face and form divine."—Here a thin voice cried Gladstone, and great confusion arose for a few minutes, some shouting Gladstone and others Bacconsfield. "Now gentlemen—(and ladies)—the idylistic school—hem, hem." At this stage a fit of coughing seized both lecturer and audience, caused, as I found out afterwards, by the burning of cayenne pepper. One or two of the lamps were put out, and the chairman coming forward said, "I am sorry to have to adjourn this meeting, still sorrier that it should be in consequence of the lecturer's own imprudence."

"Vote of thanks to Mr Taylor for his conduct in the shair," cried the factor ironically.

When we got out I hurried Miss M'Lucas to the omnibus; Mr Paul, Trant, and others followed, and Mr Park was about to enter also, when a hand shut the door and a voice shouted to the driver to go on. "We'll go, Park," said Ted, taking the arm of the crestfallen lecturer, "in the wagonette."

This, however, was not permitted. A crowd of ferocious, bearded, and kilted men closed gradually round, laid hold of Park and carried him shoulder high—despite his entreaties—into the inn, where they seated him, quaking with fear, in an arm-chair at the head of the table.

"The shentleman," shouted one, with great gesticulation, "will take gleese of whiskey after his lapours."

"Ferry goot observation," chorused the others, and a glass of whiskey was placed before Park, which in a feeble way he put to his lips.

"Shentlemans as is shentlemans gives drink for drink," said the former speaker.

"What does he mean?" appealed the poor victim to Ted.

"I fancy he means that you are to tell the innkeeper to stand them drams all round."

"For heaven's sake," groaned Park, "let him give them what they like. I'll pay it if they let me out of this."

Ironical cries of "He's the real shentleman" arose from the crowd, a way was opened to the door, we got into the wagonette and drove off. As he got away from his enemies, Park ventured to give vent to his feelings.

"Was there ever such a set of savages! I have been a subscriber to missions in Africa, and these are worse than any heathen there. I'll have the law on them. All this comes from the connection between Church and State. Who could have imagined that the name of a great statesman like Gladstone could have so infuriated them."

While he was thus pouring forth his feelings, we saw, on looking towards the other side of the loch, every window of the inn at Drissaig lighted up, while across

the water came the strains of "Ho ro Morag," and we knew the Celts were holding high festival at Mr Park's expense. When we reached Tostary, Miss M'Lucas tried to soothe the ruffled feelings of the Art critic, and with some success, but her old savage uncle could not repress his delight at hearing of the night's adventure.

"He's a conceited creature, yon Park, do ye know, Mr O'Halloran; he actually offered to take the family worship for me, as if I was not parfectly competent for the exercise (here the usual sweep of the stump) as was them as was pefore me."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE BODACH OF GLENBOGARY.

NEXT day our party at Tostary was diminished by the departure of Mr Paul. He was the happy owner of a yacht, which had during his visit been enclosed in the little bay, into which the Bogary ran. He now went off in her to Brex, a shooting lodge in the north, with a large deer forest attached. Before he left, he made me agree to visit him at Brex for a few days, when he would give me, he hoped, some good sport. I gladly promised to do this. Paul was really a fine hearty fellow, full of information on all subjects, and good company at all times.

After he left, Mr Park took himself off to his room, and ponies were brought round for Miss M'Lucas and Ted, who were to go over to Letter to play lawn tennis, and lunch at the Farquhar's. Trant not being an equestrian, drove himself over in the dog-cart. He went off beaming, as Mrs Farquhar in her note of invitation had said that Miss M'Lean was to be of the party.

I was standing at the door of the house, waiting for Donald M'Leod, the gamekeeper, with whom I was

to take a turn on the moor, and watching the receding figures of Miss M'Lucas and Ted as they disappeared up Glenbogary, when my arm was touched by Mr M'Lucas, who was looking with a face grinning with delight in the same direction.

"That will do fine," Mr Gunter; "I'm thinking they will make a grand pair. Good blood and good money is good company."

"You allude to them," I said, pointing to the disappearing couple.

"In coorse I do," he replied, "I've had great anxieties, I will not mind telling you, apout that lassie; you know apout her carrying on, pefore I came to the country, with that neer-do-weel at Reudle."

"You mistake my friend utterly," said I, hotly, "when you call him by such a name. He's as fine a fellow"—

"No offence, sir, no offence meant; in coorse he's your friend, but he wrote a letter to me, sir, as was most impertinent. It's not the likes of him that will come into my feemily. I never could abide him, put I will no deny but I had at one time views of Mr Park."

"He is not of very high family, I should think."

"No, put he is well off, and has a fine place, and a clever lassie could just wind him round her finger; put, after all, your friend O'Halloran is more like her."

"If I might venture to ask a question on such a

subject, sir. What does Miss M'Lucas herself think of your arrangements as to her disposal?"

"What does she think?" hissed M'Lucas between his teeth. "She must think as I think. She's ferry strong in the mind I must say, but she'll have to come to that yet. I may tell you Mr Gunter, confidentially, that we had a fine row this morning about this Frackersaig going on. You would see at preakfast that she was not ferry well pleased?"

I certainly had noticed in the morning that Miss M'Lucas seemed a good deal depressed in spirits, and had not her usual sprightly flow of humour as she set out on her expedition in the morning. I was not, however, going to say so to old M'Lucas, and did not answer his query. He went on, however, without waiting for a reply.

"Yes, yes, she is ferry strong in the mind. She would not promise me not to speak to that man from Reudle if she meets him at Frackersaig. I would not let her go at all if it was not that I had promised M'Lean himself, and I don't like to preak my word."

"I think it would be cruel not to allow her to go, sir," I said.

"Maype it would, put that would make no difference if I had to do it. I am as strong in the mind as she is. When I say a thing it must pe done, Mr Gunter, that is my way, as it was with them as was pefore me. Put I must be off to look after them work

people, it's little they will do if my eye is not upon them."

M'Lucas shuffled off, and Donald and the dogs coming round, I got out my gun, and we went down to the stepping-stones below the house by which the Bogary is crossed. We were to shoot along the other side of the burn to the waterfall, a few miles up, then we were to cross the river, and work our way back. As we were going up the brae on the side of the stream opposite Tostary, I took occasion to make some inquiries of Donald as to the last night's proceedings, in which he had taken a lively part, though he kept himself well in the background.

"You had a fine time of it last night, Donald, at that lecture of Mr Park's."

"Deed ay, sir. It's no much instruction we gets in these parts; it was ferry enterteening."

"It didn't seem as if you found it so, when you and others brought it to a close as you did. I saw what you were after in the back benches. It was you that struck the light when the pepper was burnt."

"And did ye really see it, sir?" replied Donald with some glee. "Well you know the people apout here canna apide the idea of Mr Park being married with Miss Kate at all, and there was a great gathering arranged after the kirk last Sabbath."

"I suppose you kept it up at the inn afterwards?"

"Deed we did that; we had a fine time. The

factor was that full of drink I do pelieve he would kiss his wife's mother. There was a bit fight at the end too, but no bones broke. I think they were just drinking because Mr Park was to pay for't. He's a hard man yon, I'm thinking."

"Indeed, how?"

"He'll no part with a penny if he can help it. One tay he was sending over a poy to Tomindoun, that's ten mile, and he only gave him a sixpence. 'That's not enough, sir,' said the poy. 'Quite enough, says he. 'I could send a letter all the way to London for a penny.' Besides that," added Donald, as the crown of the unfortunate Publius' iniquity, "he canna shoot at all."

"Did he try it?" I enquired.

"Try it? He was out just one day, and it was enough. I was in peeril of my life the whole time. He was letting off his gun just promiscuous like: a fine figure he was! He had on what they call kiker-brokers. I am sure he would pe complaining me to Mr M'Lucas for what I said. He was ferry angry, but I couldna help it."

"What offence did you give him, Donald?"

"Och, he came down to the purn with his kiker-brokers on, and he put out his leg, with the rough stocking on it, upon the big stepping-stone, 'Isn't that a fine calf of a leg,' says he, 'Donald?' 'Yes, sir,' says I, 'if it's no the leg of a calf.' He was not pleased."

So ho, good dog! Down charge, Ponto!

We kept pretty close to the burn, always ascending towards the hills. The birds were very wild, but we managed to bag one now and then. The sun was beginning to decline when we reached the waterfall. We sat down on the bank above it to discuss our lunch. The stream fell many feet into a deep black pool, with great boulders on either side, where the waters boiled and seethed. This pool was at the very head of Glenbogary, which was at this spot contracted into a deep narrow fissure; above the waterfall was flat boggy moorland. On the top of one of the boulders grew a rowan tree, which hung above the pool and made it darker with its shadow. It was a piece of wild scenery. From where we sat we looked right down into the bubbling caldron below. I was lying at ease on the heather, lulled by the sound of the falling water, and fast passing into dreamland, when Donald, having refreshed his inner man and counted the birds, seemed desirous for a little conversation.

"That's where the ghost is, sir."

"Where?" I said. "Do you mean down in yonder pool?"

"Ay, shust there."

Seeing I was now in for a story of some kind, I roused myself up to listen, and resting on my elbow bade him go on, which he did in the very solemn tone

which Highlanders always adopt when they speak of anything bordering upon the supernatural.

"Well, you see, sir, there was two men over langsyne at the Slasach market. It was in the time of my grandfather; and I've often heard my father speak apout it. They was at the market, and was, in coorse, drinking ferry freely; and after they left the market one of them was never seen again. One was from the other side of the country, over at Cronan, near where your friend is yonder, at Reudle; he was an old man, with long white hair, and made a good deal driving cattle and sheep, and the like of that, while his son stayed at home at Cronan to look after the farm. Well then, when he never cam back, his son thought for a time that he had gone south on business, to the Falkirk Tryst like; but when the tryst was over, and he did not return, there was great search everywhere, but nothing of him could they find; and the other man said he took good-bye with him just outside the Slasach market-stance, and that was the last of him that he seed. Well then, after a time they gave up looking altogether; and one night, when his son was sleeping, he felt like a cold wind, he said, upon his face, which wakened him up, and he saw, in a corner of the room, something like a cloud of mist, like what is sometimes on the top of the hull; and out of this cloud came his father, terrible white like, but just as he used to be in his appearance when he was going apout; and his son saw as if his head was

all broken, and the blood streaming from it. He looked at his son for a time, and then vanished away. In the morning the son could not get him out of his mind the whole day, put his wife told him it was dreaming he was, and he paid no more thought to it. The week after the old man appeared again in the same way, but with a ferry angry appearance, and pointing to his head, said, 'I cannot rest; I cannot rest.' The son was frighted, and woke up his wife, who could see nothing at all; put the son knew then that his father had come to a pad end, and began to search again everywhere he could think. One night, then, he came back to Cronan ferry tired, and fell asleep on the sofa in the room down-stairs, when the rest hed gone to ped. He was wakened again the same as pefore, and there was the old man standing; and says he, 'Go to Glenbogary to-morrow night,' and with that he like passed out of his sight. Well, next night his son and another man sets off for Glenbogary after it was dark, and as they was passing round yon turn in the road they took a look down in the pool there; and over the pool they saw the old man with his hands out, and his fingers pointing to the water. The two saw him as plain as anything, so they go down to Tostary; and in the morning they came and dragged the pool, and the body of the man was in it; and more than that, they got a big cromack—a stick, you know—all broken, with a stone to it, to sink it; and they knew it pelonged to the

other man was at the market with the man as was killed. He was taken up, and confessed the murder, and was hanged by the Lords at Inverary. But it's a curious thing; I don't know how you will account for it, seeing the body was found. They say the man who was murdered walks yet."

"Walks! What do you mean, Donald?"

"I mean he's whiles seen in the glen. I've heard my father say there was those that had seen him in his time; and he has been walking of late."

"Nonsense!"

"Well, you may say so if you like, sir, but Dougal Mor was over at Tostary in the morning, and he was saying some as was at the lecture seed him last night. Take care, sir. Look out! there's a blackcock making right for us. Lie down! lie down!"

Donald had discerned the bird far away. It came right over where we were, and I fired at him. He dropt down at our feet with a tremendous thud.

"Ye did rael weel sir, you did fine. He's an old bird, as old as the turkey cock Shon M'Neil sold, I'm thinking."

"Who was he? Donald!"

"Oh, nothing, but M'Neil was buying a turkey cock at the Christmas time, from the provost at Drissaig. 'What do you want for him?' says Shon; 'I want profit,' says the man. 'Prophet,' says Shon; 'dod I thought he was an anteedeluvian!' He was a ferry jokey man; but we will now, if you please,

go down the ground on the other side of the burn."

I reached Tostary just in time to dress for dinner, to which meal Mr Park came down in very bad humour. "Look at that scandalous affair," he said, flourishing a piece of dirty paper before the company. Ted, who with the others, had got back from Letter, took it, and read amid great laughter, an account from the Innkeeper at Drissaig, for the refreshment consumed on his premises on the previous night.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| "To drinking yourself and freens | | | |
| 3 gals pest ila | 2 | 14 | |
| bred and ches with same | | 1 | 6 |
| us of rume | | 3 | |
| Totle | £2 | 18 | 6 |

N.B pyment is riquisted by bearer."

"It is most disgraceful," said Park, "I will not pay it. It is most atrocious."

"Deed ye had petter pay't," said M'Lucas, rubbing his stump gleefully. Though to pay anything himself was like extracting a tooth, nothing pleased him better than to see another victimised. "Ye'd petter pay't and pe done wi' it, and no keep our dinner waiting. Deed I would not answer for your life if you don't pay't. He's a wild man the innkeeper."

Poor Publius, not wishing to have any further altercation with the Celts, handed the footman the money

with a rueful countenance, and we filed in to dinner. The ladies gave us their company for a while, as Mrs M'Tavish sunk into an unusually prolonged state of coma after her repast. The night was calm and beautiful, and leaving M'Lucas and the gentlemen mixing a tumbler of toddy, I strolled out on to the cliff walk to have a quiet cigar.

It was just after nightfall. There was little light, but the stars had come out in all their glory. Seawards could be discerned the flashing gleam of a lighthouse far away, and nearer, the red and blue lamps of a northern steamer. While I was enjoying the cool balmy air and the fragrant weed, I heard a light footstep on the gravel walk, and Miss M'Lucas was beside me.

"I just came out," said she, "to enjoy the night. Isn't it splendid. Mrs M'Tavish is slumbering peacefully in the drawing-room. Don't you hear her? I am glad you are coming to the ball to-morrow, Mr Gunter. I do hope it will go off well."

Suddenly I thought I would take the opportunity of saying a word for my friend Bob, and foolishly said—

"Our old friend Taylor, poor boy, is to be there; but I fancy that is little matter to you now."

She turned right round on me, and drawing herself up to her full length, said—

"I shall be glad to meet Mr Taylor, and as for that being of little matter to me, you will pardon me for

saying that it is no matter at all to you. But I'm going down to Davie Boyle the fisher's. No, don't come, Mr Gunter; I know the way, and am quite able to take care of myself. Do not spend any of your superfluous anxiety on me." She went rapidly down the path, and was soon out of sight.

I smoked some time longer, lounged round the house, and gradually found myself strolling up Glenbogary, thinking of many things, among others of the story I had heard from Donald. Finding I had gone further than I intended, I was turning to go homewards when I heard a rustle, and a tall figure glided past me. It seemed hardly to touch the ground. It was the form of an old man; his hair was long and snow white, and his face the colour of parchment, and of a livid hue. He passed me swiftly as with a rush, and by the time I turned to look at him he was almost out of sight. He held up his hand, which seemed to glow and scintillate with a white light. I looked till he vanished, and knew I had seen the bodach of Glenbogary.

"Bless me, old boy," said Ted beside me, "I've been looking for you everywhere. What has taken you up here? I only found you out by the fragrance of that excellent weed. I hope you have one to spare."

"Did you see it?" I replied. "Did you see the ghost?"

"Ghost! my dear fellow; that's really too much of

a good thing. A plain matter-of-fact fellow like you talking of ghosts! If you had been with Trant and myself taking a stiff tumbler of M'Lucas' Glendronach —it's a most excellent spirit, I assure you, and much more real than that you have seen. Let's get to roost. Ghost! Rubbish! Rubbish!"

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE FRACKERSAIG BALL.

THE next day was spent by the guests at Tostary indoors, busied with preparations for the Frackersaig ball. Miss M'Lean rode over after breakfast from Maolachy, and she and Miss M'Lucas occupied themselves in the drawing-room arranging costumes. That apartment was littered with shreds of cotton and calico. Mr Park strutted about in his crusader's costume, and clanked his sword against all the articles of furniture in the room. Ted added to his belongings a parasol of yellow tint, and was now supposed to represent Froggy going a-wooing, as sketched in a nursery book that was closely perused by the fair designers. Some difficulty was experienced about Mr Trant's dress. At last it was resolved that he should appear as a Tartar. An old sheepskin, emblematical of his connection with the great Australian mutton importation company, was fashioned into a coat, and an old muff of Miss M'Lucas was transformed into a cap for him. His face was dyed nut-brown, and he might have been supposed to have come direct from the banks of the Volga. I was rigged out as an Arab. A night-dress was elongated and wound over

my ordinary apparel, with a pair of old slippers of M'Lucas' done up into sandals, a flowing bandana bound round the head, and a long Egyptian pipe in my hand, I was not altogether a bad representation of a sheik of the desert. All these arrangements occupied the whole day. Two or three of the servants were called in to assist, and Mrs M'Tavish roused herself up and displayed an almost preternatural activity as she plied her needle and scissors. We dined early, and as we were to leave immediately after dinner, we sat down in our ball dresses. Old M'Lucas eyed us with astonishment when he came in, but all the remark he vouchsafed to make was—

"He hadna seen sic a daft set since he visited the asylum in Melpourne."

We all got stowed into the omnibus, and Ted and I said good-bye to M'Lucas, as the factor was to meet us at Frackersaig, and drive us home after the night's entertainment. The old fellow was most effusive in his regret at parting with us, and hoped it would not be long before we were back. To Ted he was especially complaisant, and grasped his hand as if he would never let it go.

The road to Frackersaig cuts right across the point between Tostary and the Drissaig Loch. Maolachy is about half way, and we took it on the road, to pick up old M'Lean, thence three-quarters of an hour's drive brought us to Frackersaig. It is a long low house near the water's edge, and we could see dis-

tinctly the Drissaig lights further up on the other side of the loch. A good many small yachts were anchored opposite the house. They had brought people to the ball from the neighbourhood, and even from some of the far-off western isles.

There was a curious assemblage of people within which seemed to fill up all the rooms in the house, and overflowed into the large entrance hall. There was a bandit chief, an Italian singing girl, a Roman Pope who walked arm-in-arm with a Greek priest. Mary Queen of Scots danced in the same quadrille with Queen Elizabeth. Rob Roy and Bailie Nicol Jarvie conversed affably together. The squatter was there dressed as a Chinee. His wife as Helen M'Gregor. Young M'Lachlan Stigarstra as a policeman. Among them all, however, two figures were conspicuous, by the grotesqueness of their attire, that of Mr Publius Park and the tenant of Reudle, our friend Bob. The former had girt round his crusader's manly waist a Wabton shawl. The latter had on the dress of a Capuchin monk. He had shaved off his whiskers, and a round piece on the crown of his head, and was as thoroughly disguised as it was possible to conceive. The meeting between him and Miss M'Lucas passed off without embarrassment. There was a friendly greeting, congratulations on each other's dress, and they danced a reel together. Indeed, Mr Bob turned his attentions very distinctly to Miss M'Lean, who

however, seemed much more civil to the Australian mutton importer.

"Is it to dance another reel, Mr Taylor, you would?" I heard her say to Bob, "when it's Mr Trant is going to buy my father's clip of wool to mix with what is coming home in his ships from Australia. Deed it's engaged to him for the next four dances I am."

"Take care," he said, "the engagement is not more prolonged." At which remark Miss M'Lean tossed her head disdainfully.

Dancing went on briskly until supper time. This meal was a most substantial repast, and the guests were very gay and merry. It was served in a barn outside, set with long tables, and decorated with evergreens. At a very late hour of the night, after dancing had been resumed with renewed zest, I found a few choice spirits gathered in a corner of this apartment. There was an engineer from Edinburgh, a ruddy fresh looking man, with a broad forehead, and determined expression. There was the squatter, and Doctor M'Aulay, the medical practitioner of the district. The appearance of the latter was somewhat striking. His father in his youth had served as an officer in the Lochaber fencibles, a regiment raised shortly after the forty-five. The doctor had donned the paternal trews of checked tartan, and had girt on a huge claymore, which was an heirloom in his family. The claymore was well enough, but the trews were much too narrow. They seemed to cling round his legs, and at

the waist, there was a very marked hiatus through which breadths of linen were occasionally visible. The jacket was also of the straitest kind. Its original dark colour had changed to a pea green, and some few silver buttons remained here and there to tell of its former splendour. Publius Park strutted about the barn—what brought him there I do not know. Possibly as he did not dance, being an elder of his kirk, he sought for more intellectual entertainment elsewhere.

"Yes," said the Edinburgh gentleman, "I call that good whiskey; I should say it was Campbelton."

"I don't know," said the squatter, "it seems to me as if there was a little of Glendronach mixed with it."

"It is a good sound speerit whatever," said the Doctor, "put my opeenion is that it's a stock cask that Frackersaig has. He puts all kinds into it—Paisley, and Glendronach, and Clynelash and so on; it's not a pad plan, put I think myself that Clynelash is the pest speerit for drinking by itself like; it's like M'Comas' coffins—M'Comas hed an undertaker's shop in Glasgow, and he put in the window—'who uses these will never try any other kind.' I think myself there's no drink for the health like a little speerits, in moderation of coorse."

"So do I," said the Edinburgh man; "in Edinburgh the hospital lecturers can't get a case of gout to lecture on, but in London, where beer and

porter is the drink of the people, there are plenty subjects."

"I am surprised to hear you, gentlemen," interposed Park, "who should know better, and be an example to the working classes, speaking in that light way of what is the curse of Scotland."

"Hang the working classes!" said he of Edinburgh.

"Perhaps you are not aware, gentlemen," said Park, stiffening his back, "that I am a teetotaller."

"And perhaps you are not aware, sir, whoever on earth you may pe," replied the Doctor hotly, "that *I* am a teetotaller."

"You a teetotaller!" exclaimed Park in astonishment.

"Yes,—me a teetotaller," said the Doctor; "but I'm no bigoted!"

"I think," said Park, nothing daunted, "the liquor traffic and disestablishment are the two burning questions of our time. I said once at a meeting"——

"I don't care a button, sir," said the Edinburgh man, making ready for the fray, "what you said, but if it was in favour of disestablishment it must have been confounded nonsense."

"Sir," said Publius grandly, "are you aware that the Church is in a minority, sir; a decided minority; that the people are taxed for that minority? It is a decided injustice, sir. I said at the public meeting—"

"And are you aware, sir," replied the Edinburgh

champion, "that it is not in a minority; that it does not cost the people of this country anything, the revenues being drawn from teinds, and that the connection between Church and State is an incalculable benefit to this country?"

"Ay, it's a national infeedle he is," suggested the Doctor, "thank God there's no many of his kind in these pairts."

"Yes, he's in fine company with secularists and atheists of every kind," said he of Edinburgh, warming into a peculiar eloquence. "If his way of it is taken we may soon have a Roman Catholic on the throne and a State without a recognition of the Lord and King of nations."

"The likes of him," said the Doctor, aggravatingly pointing at the indignant Publius with his toddy ladle, "is no worth the minding — he is not worth powder and shot. As the Gaelic saying is, if an ass kick you on the road, will you sue him at the law?"

This was too much for Publius, but he repressed his wrath, and turned to the Doctor blandly and said—

"Do you call me an ass, sir?"

"How can I know whether you are or not till I put a piece of thistle to your nose? but 'deed (turning to the squatter) our friend minds me ferry much of the story of Lachy and Shon Creerar, that hes the shop of Drissaig. Lachy went in one tay, 'What to you sell here?' says he; 'Blockheads,' says Shon, in an angry tone; 'Och,' says Lachy, 'you must pe doing a good

puisiness, for there is only one left.' I'm thinking this shentleman is in that trade."

"I will not stay here," said Publius, "to be insulted."

"You can go then if you like it petter."

"Sir, the day is coming," said Publius, assuming a most pompous attitude, "the day is coming—nay it is not far off—nay it is at hand—when you shall see the tide of vengeance (hem) flow over these corrupt institutions you prize. When men "—— (hem).

"Blethers!" said the Edinburgh man.

Publius now retreated from society he found so utterly uncongenial, but he paused at the door and stretched his hand towards where we were sitting.

"Who are on my side?—the great and the good of the land, eminent statesmen, the men of learning, and (hem) piety."

"Blethers," said the Edinburgh man derisively.

"Who are on your side?—a corrupt aristocracy (hem); on your side are the dregs and blackguardism of the country!"

"Deed, I'm glad to hear it," said the doctor, "on such good authority."

We were entering the hall of the house shortly afterwards, and listening to the strains of the Reel of Tulloch, when we were startled by the crash of broken glass, and the screams of the dancers in the drawing-room. Cries arose of "Where's the doctor? Send for Dr M'Aulay! Oh, bring him quick! Is he

killed? Do you think he will die?" Rushing into the room, we saw at a glance what had occurred. In the partition between the drawing-room and a little parlour at the back was a glass door, which reached from floor to ceiling. Mr Park, occupied in meditation on his own perfections, had not noticed that it was shut, and drove his head right through it. The poor man, with nis face frightfully cut, lay in a faint on the floor, in quite a pool of blood, surrounded by a group, who were terror-stricken at this apparent intrusion of the grim enemy into the midst of their hilarity. The doctor put them calmly aside, and with professional coolness examined his patient. To the cries of "Oh, doctor dear, is he much hurt?—Is he dangerously wounded?" he gave no answer, but ordered Park to be carried into a bedroom, which was speedily done by the piper and other three servants. While we were all standing silent, or in quiet tones talking of the accident, the doctor appeared, and his merry countenance put our anxiety at rest.

"Dance on," he said, "shentlemen and ledies, there's no much the matter with the body; he has lost some blood, which, I hope, will cool his temper. Think of the likes of him speaking against whiskey and the Auld Kirk! Do you know, Frackersaig, I think it is shust a shudgement on him for what he was saying."

"Deed, I wouldn't wonder," replied that gentleman; and this explanation of the calamity seemed

to be readily accepted. With Highlanders, any misfortune happening to their neighbours is readily called a "judgment." When it happens to themselves it is termed "a trial."

Day was beginning to break when the party began to leave. A large number of us, muffled up in great-coats, stood on the gravel opposite the house, waiting for the carriages to come round. The morning was chill. The mists were lifting on the other side of the loch, and the sea-birds were already in motion. Looking seawards, the rising sun had not yet touched the waters, and they looked dark and dreary. Ted went off to look after the factor. He found him asleep on some straw in the corner of a byre, and roused him with considerable difficulty, for his potations on the previous night had been evidently heavy. I thought he never would make his appearance with the pony; and a discussion between Trant and the Doctor on the probable result to the health of the working-classes from the general use of Australian mutton and beef, was not very enlivening.

"Deed, sir, I'm no in with your scheme at all, at all. I do believe there's nothing so good for the people as goot porridge and milk; but here is what is even petter nor that, in it's own place. Here is Frackersaig with the pitters."

Our worthy host stood at the door, holding in his hand an old-fashioned Dutch bottle, filled with what the Doctor called bitters.

"They are a real good kind, Doctor, I do assure you," he said, "none of your medical concoctions. There's gentian and good camomile flowers, and the best whiskey that's on this country side—and that's Glendronach."

"I prefer Clynelash, myself," said the Doctor, tossing off his glass; "but they are really ferry good—indeed, fine for keeping the cold morning air aff the stomach. I'm thinking that pody Park upstairs would no be pleased if he saw us."

"I suppose, Doctor," replied Frackersaig, "I shall have the honour of his company for some time?"

"Och, no! I'm going up with these shentlemen the length of Stronbuy, and then will walk on to see the mistress at Achlorachan, but will pe pack before dark. Get a large sheet of sticking-plaister from Tomindoun, and I'll soon heve the creature on his legs."

The doctor was an extraordinary character. He was supposed to live in a house about twenty miles off, but was migratory in his habits. He was deservedly renowned for his medical skill over a large district of the highlands. His services were attained often only after a long and exciting chase. The messenger on reaching his dwelling, would perhaps be told he had left a few days ago for Cronan, seven miles away. On reaching Cronan he would find he had been sent for to Tynripie. At Tynripie he would learn that he had crossed in a boat to see some one

at Drissaig. After a long hunt, he would at last be captured. But however late, and at the cost of whatever fatigue, he was always ready to obey the call to the bedside of any sufferer, rich or poor. His labours among the latter were unwearied, and his remuneration small. Perhaps there is no class of men in the world so ill paid, yet so devoted to doing good in their profession, as the country practitioner. Of this class, Doctor M'Aulay was one of the best and tenderest hearted. To professional attainments, he added a large knowledge of many subjects. His conversation was instructive and amusing, and he was always a welcome guest for his conversational powers, as well as his medical skill.

At Drissaig we dropped Bob, who with an Inverness cape thrown over his capuchin monk's dress, was to walk home to Reudle, by Glenbogary. As we passed the manse, he was strongly in favour of what he called "drawing" Doctor M'Caudle, and was beginning to emit a series of unearthly sounds, when the medical man stopped him.

"Deed, young man, ye had petter no, the meenister's a fine ceevil man, but if ye wad play any shoke upon him, it's may pe to fire at you through the window he would do. He's ferry wild at any person who tries to take him off whatever. No, no, just go away home with you in peace."

All the way up the glen, the Doctor discoursed on many subjects, and was by far the liveliest of the trio,

for Ted and I were continually nodding. He described the various stars, then beginning to fade away in the heavens, for astronomy was one of his hobbies. He discussed the land question, for he was a strong conservative politician, and when we set him down opposite Stronbuy, he was denouncing Park and his views of disestablishment.

"To think of a creature of that kind lifting up his leg upon our dear auld kirk. Dod he deserved more than he got. It was shust a shudgement upon him."

The worthy man refused to cross the river with us and have a cup of coffee. "No, he would be at Achlorachan in time for preakfast." His working clothes were there. He took off his long claymore, and catching it by the blade, allowed the heavy handle to hang over his shoulder, and after bidding us good-bye, tramped vigorously on his road; much younger though we were in years, we had not his powers of endurance, and betook ourselves to bed, as soon as we reached Stronbuy. It was well on in the afternoon when we got up to breakfast.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE SUPERNATURAL.

A FEW days passed quietly enough after our gaieties at Frackersaig. Our little rooms at Stronbuy seemed small after the spacious apartments of Tostary. On the whole we were dull; our neighbours were busy with their harvest, and through our glass we could make out Ballachantui and Toons on the other side of the glen, working hard at the head of a band of reapers. Dr M'Caudle was from home in the south, so that we had not even the diversion of going to the kirk. We did our best, however, to pass the time, and shot and fished with energy. The weather continued dry, and there was but little to be got out of the river, but we still thrashed it most assiduously. We were talking of going over to Reudle for a little variety, when we were cheered by a visit from our friend Doctor M'Aulay on his way to see his patient at Auchlorachan.

The doctor brought us our first news from the outer world since the night of the ball. Mr Park was now over at Tostary, and was rapidly recovering from the effects of his accident, though his face still bore fearful marks of the wounds he had received. The doctor

had just come from Tostary, where he had been attending him. Our visitor had more to tell us, however, than that Park was convalescent, and with a solemn countenance spoke of the frequent reappearance of the bodach of Glenbogary. This dread visitant had been seen more than once. The whole household at Tostary was terror-stricken. Park had been almost frightened out of the few wits he possessed, and was longing to get away from a country which seemed to him associated with everything horrible. M'Lucas, hardened sinner though he was, was full of dread. An apparition of the same kind had been seen by him at Ballarat, and his faith in the appearance of such *revenants* was very strong. The only person in the household who seemed to treat the mystery lightly was Miss M'Lucas. She took her evening walks as usual, and went down to Davie Boyle's on the shore after dusk without fear. But on the night of the doctor's visit an occurrence had taken place which would put a stop to her wanderings for some time to come.

Shortly after dinner she left to go to Boyle's to see the child whose sickness was the cause of her visits. She had not been gone long when the door bell rang violently, and the door itself was loudly knocked at. No one would venture for a time to open it, but the doctor at last summoned courage to do so, and admitted Bob, carrying Miss M'Lucas in his arms. He was on his way, he explained, to Maolachy,

and was turning off the Glenbogary road at the junction near the house with that leading to Maolachy, when he heard piercing screams, and on rushing to the place whence they proceeded, he found Miss M'Lucas lying at the foot of the rocks. She had stumbled in the darkness going down the path. Bob took her up and bore her to the house. The doctor fortunately found nothing worse the matter than a bad sprain, which would keep the young lady some days in her room. M'Lucas, instead of being grateful to her rescuer, treated him in a savage and ungentlemanly manner. He not only never asked him to enter out of the hall into the house, but cursed him for his impudence in venturing to enter his door. The treatment he received from her uncle, the doctor said, seemed to pain Miss M'Lucas more than her accident. She spoke of his ingratitude in the strongest way. "She has a strong mind of her own, yon lassie," concluded the doctor, "and I wouldn't wonder but you will see a split between her and Tostary before long. He is just nothing but a parfect barbarian. But what can you get from a sow but a grunt? The strange thing is that the ferry evening, an hour or so after the accident, the bodach was seen by the dairymaid walking between the house and the rocks. 'Deed, I'm afraid something terrible is coming upon Tostary."

"Now doctor, my dear fellow!" cried Ted, "do you really believe in this ghost business yourself?"

"I don't know, sir, what to think of it," replied the doctor. "I am well aware that men of science are saying that such things cannot be; that the universe is governed by laws and so on, and goes on like a clock, and there can be no interference with it. I read these things in a scientific journal a doctor in Glasgow sends me; but my opinion is that men of science don't know everything. There's forces at work regularly in the world no doubt, as they say; but there's other forces outside of the world which may from time to time come into it. That's what I'm often thinking. There's things science can't explain."

Ted, evidently seeing the doctor was, like a salmon, in a taking mood, proceeded to throw a fly over him, to which the worthy man rose in a moment.

"Now doctor, it's all very well to argue in that philosophical manner, but a fact is worth a bushel of philosophy; have you ever seen anything of a supernatural character yourself?"

"My dear sir, I have, though I don't like to be speaking of such things. There were them sailors that were wrecked on the rock off the point of Hogary down yonder. It was a wonderful thing. In the dead of the night a man at Carnaig had a dream that he saw men on the rock, and next morning he made his neighbours launch a boat with him and go out to the rock, and there they found five poor wretches clinging on to the slippery stones; and there was the

late Mrs M'Lean Maolachy! But I don't, I tell you, like to be speaking of these things."

"Oh! do tell us," said Ted; "it takes a good deal to convince Englishmen like us, who have no Celtic blood in our veins."

"It's perhaps a greater loss to you, that want, than you think. People with the Celtic blood have more reverence for what is above them than the Saxon."

"Never mind that; tell us about Mrs M'Lean."

"Well then, I attended her on her death-bed. She died very suddenly, and her husband was with her daughter in the south of England. She was a ferry fine woman. She said to myself that she would be willing to die if she could see her child. Soon after that she fell into a kind of a trance, and when she came out of it she told me she had seen her child, and was quite happy. That ferry hour her daughter saw her form come into the room where she was sleeping and lean over her as if to kiss her. She thought in the morning it had been a dream; but two or three days after she got a letter telling of her mother's death."

"It was a strange coincidence," said Ted.

"Coincidence!" cried the doctor, "it was more nor that; wasn't there M'Lachlan of Stigarstra's own father, that I've heard tell the story many's the time? He was sitting in the dining-room of Stigarstra one evening, and he said to his wife, 'There's my brother the professor coming up the road.'—He had a brother

a professor in Glasgow.—'So it is,' said she, looking out; 'what makes him go round to the back door?' She went to the back door and opened it to let him in, but there was no one there. At that very time the professor had departed this life in Glasgow."

"That was a coincidence too," said Ted, aggravatingly.

"Young man," said the doctor gravely, "you may not believe me, but will you not believe your bible? Yon is an awful story in the Book of Job. 'In thoughts from the visions of the night when deep sleep falleth upon men. Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face. It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof.' What do you make of that?"

"Oh!" said Ted, still bent on drawing out the narrator, "the writer of that only wrote in the belief current in his time."

"Do you think," said the doctor testily, "there would be that belief in something beyond us in all time if it was not there? There's a book on phrenology I have speaks of the organ of the marvellous. If there is in man that organ, mustn't there be something to answer to it. Perhaps you haven't got it, and it's as useless telling you these things as pointing out a picture to a blind man. Did you ever hear of how the estate of Connage came to the present man's father?"

"No," replied Ted; "but as I'm sceptical about these things, perhaps you will tell me."

"Deed I daresay I have told you quite enough, but I will tell you this one. Connage belonged to a far-off friend of the present proprietor: he was an old man, and died without a will. Mr Fletcher, who was his parish minister and ferry intimate with him—they say they were always at the drinking together—and he often told him he should make a will; but when he died not a scrap of a will could be found high or low, and the property went to a man with whom he had no acquaintance, but was his heir according to the law. Well then, some time after that, the old laird came to the minister in the night and wanted him to go to a lawyer in Edinburgh, where he would get a will. He came three times, but the minister paid no heed. The last time he thought he went with the laird into a close and up two stairs, where there was a table in a room all covered with papers, and a press in the side of the room. The laird opened the press and pointed to the bottom drawer and said, 'My will is in there.' Mr Fletcher was shortly after that in Edinburgh at the General Assembly, and passing the close one day with a friend, he made an excuse, and they went to call on the lawyer. Well, he was shown into the ferry room he saw in his dream; he was so taken aback that he told the lawyer the whole story: he just laughed at him. But they opened the press, and then the bottom

drawer, and there was the will, sealed with the laird's own seal. It had been written by a partner of the lawyer, who was dead, and it left the property to the laird's own brother-in-law, who was a great friend of his; and it's his family has it yet. I've heard Mr Fletcher, who was an old man when I knew him, tell the story himself."

"But how do you account for these things, Doctor?" I interposed, "have you any theory regarding them?"

"Well, I have that too. I've turned it over in my mind many's the time. I think sometimes that man has both a pheesical body and a speeritual body. The speeritual body as it were permeating the other, and having the same organs as the other, and at death, and perhaps in sleep, the two are separated. But I don't know; one gets into a great fog sometimes thinking of these things, like the two Stornoway men on the Minch in the time of the herring fishing."

"What happened them?"

"O, they got into a thick mist like and didn't know what to do. 'What, John,' says one, 'would our wives say if they knew where we were?' 'I shouldn't care about that,' says the other, 'if we only knew ourselves.' There's fogs of speculation that are just as thick as what they were in."

The Doctor took an early dinner with us, and we saw him afterwards across the river and down the road towards Drissaig, where a trap was to meet him and take him across to Tostary. We talked together

of many things. He was an intelligent and most agreeable companion. As we parted with him near Drissaig I rallied him upon his nomadic life, and asked him why he never got married. His reply was prompt enough.

"I cannot," said he, with a twinkle in his eye, "get a wife with the proper qualifications. In the first place she must be peautiful to gaze upon; in the second place she must be of noble lineage; in the third place she must be of undoubted piety; and in the fourth place she must have the wherewithal. I will marry, gentlemen, when I find one with these qualifications, but I hevn't seen her yet."

We sent a message by the Doctor to Dougal More to meet us with his boat at the east end of Feeshinish next day, and on going over found the brain of that worthy Celt as fully occupied with the supernatural as that of the Doctor. He brought us more news of the Glenbogary ghost. Two nights previous Mr Croker's "man" was coming down the glen from a village where he had been holding a meeting. He had scouted the idea of any interruption from the spectre. Not far from the waterfall, however, he had met with the bodach, whom he exorcised without effect. The spirit lifted off his hat and wig, which were found near the spot the next morning, and the "man" reached Drissaig with a bare poll and in a mortal state of fear. He was to leave the country by the very first boat for Ross-shire, to take advice upon

the subject from Dr M'Phail, a minister whom he held in great reverence.

The story of the "man's" encounter with the bodach was the prelude to many of a similar kind from old Dougal. We fished hard all day and made a good basket, but whenever we stopped for a moment the old man began a new yarn. His belief in the marvellous was certainly unbounded. Had we ever heard of the water kelpie? well, then, one had once been seen on that very loch; and more than that, one day he himself was sitting in his boat and he saw a vessel sailing towards him as big as a Barra skiff. He was in great terror, but when it came near it sunk out of sight just in a moment like. Ay, there were wonderful things in this world. When he was in Cauna, where the people were of his religion, there was a man who was dead appeared to his wife, and told her about purgatory, where he was. He said it was a terrible place, but he didn't much mind it after what he had suffered with her in his lifetime! And did we hear how the devil tried to take away the body of old Macracken? him that built the English Kirk at Tobar Clarsaich. There was them that told him of it, how they were watching the body in the next room and taking a leetle refraishment at the same time, when they heard like two men fighting in the room the corpse was lying in; they were feared to open the door, and sent for the priest who was down-stairs, and he made the sign of the cross and went in. After

a time he came out and took up the tongs and went back again. When he came out after that he carried with the tongs a glove that seemed all covered with blood and he put it into the fire, but not a word would he say, but after that the corpse was perfectly quiet! Oh yes, shentlemen, you may laugh, but I tell you there's terrible things in this world. Wasn't there a young man over at Cambuslaich was just possessed like with a devil and falling into the most awful fits, and a wise woman told him to eat nothing but salt herrings for a week, and then to lie down close by a burn side with his mouth open, and when he was lying there a black toad came out of his mouth and hopped away into the water. Oh yes, shentlemen, it is truth I'm telling you! Are there any witches in this country? Is it that you'll be denying next, Mr Halran? There was forty of them drowned once in the loch yonder below Drissaig. They met on the shore and said their prayers to the devil, and were crossing in the air, but a man was behind them, and when they were over the middle of the loch he said his prayer, and down they all dropped into the water, and were drowned. Ay, I knew one myself was at Pen Molach, and she was seen in the shape of a hare milking a cow, and they put the dogs on her, but she beat them with the speed she run, and when they went into the house, there was the old woman lying by the fire just done with tiredness, and all covered with mud. Och, I could tell you plenty of

stories, gentlemen. I have not a good memory, but I have a ferry good forgetency. Wasn't there a man I know'd myself at Kilblaan, dreamed he saw his brother lying on the bed beside him, and he put out his hands and felt his clothes, and they were all wet, and wasn't he a sailor the man, and drowned soon afterwards. Don't you laugh, Mr Halran, it's truth I'm saying to you. There was the miller down at Bridge-end, every night the water was turned on his mill, and one night he sat up himself and watched, and he saw a little man at work carrying away the meal in his cap, and he struck him in the back with a stick, and he vanished, and never came back no more. Ay! there's beings in this country lives under the ground, and sometimes in the moonlight nights they'll be seen dancing on the grass. I never seen them myself, but there's those has seen them, and been in their company too. They have fine houses in the yearth, and rooms of silver and gold. Deed have they. They're ferry fond of taking away children before they are baptised, and women in childbed too, but if there's a piece of cold iron near them it will keep them away. I mind hearing of a woman in Arran was carried away with them, but one night her ghost told her husband that at a certain hour next night she would be passing the house with them that stole her, and he was to throw over her her wedding gown. Well, at the very hour, they heard tramping of horses passing the house, but the man was afeared to

go out with the gown, and he and those inside heard a great cry, and in the morning the roof and walls were all smeared with blood. Just think of that, gentlemen! wasn't it terrible!

It was only nightfall that brought old Dougal's store of anecdote to a close. We had scarcely light to count our fish on the grass—not a bad day's sport, six dozen beautiful trout in all. Half of our spoil we sent by Dougal to Tostary, and the other half we took home.

"Tell them at the castle that I'll be over in a day or two," said Ted. "I'm a capital doctor for a sprained foot, and take care you don't meet the bodach of Glenbogary on the road."

"Och, sir, I don't see what he would hev to say to me that's an honest man, and my character unbleachable, as the priest will tell you if you ask him."

Notwithstanding this self-assurance, we felt convinced it was not without much trepidation that Dougal pulled his boat up the loch to make his way to Tostary in the darkness. It was with difficulty and much stumbling, Ted and I found the road to Stronbuy, and we felt right glad to sit down to our tea and fried trout, our regular repast after a day's fishing. The Feeshinish trout are red in the flesh and well flavoured, and with plenty oat-cake would make a meal for a king.

Our letters had arrived before us. Among them I found one from Mr Paul, containing a pressing invi-

tation to myself and Ted to visit Brex, and have a turn in the forest. That worthy, however, announced his intention of going over next day to call at Tostary, thence he would go to Reudle, where he would wait till I came back, and perhaps have a crack at the seals. I thought it best, too, to start next morning for Tomindoun on my way to Brex. I could wire Paul to send to meet me at the nearest station. It was a long journey, but by leaving early, and catching the boat at Tomindoun, I could do it in one day. I ordered, therefore, the factor to knock us up at six in the morning. Ted would go down with me to Drissaig in the carriage, and hire from there to Tostary. I looked out my rifle, saw it was in good order, and went to bed to dream of stalking a muckle hart, when a shout from the bodach of Glenbogary drove it away. I woke to see the dawning day, and hear the voice of the factor loudly calling on us to rise, if we would not lose the steampoat whatever.

## CHAPTER XI.

### AT BREX.

AS I stood upon the Tomindoun quay waiting for the Northern steamboat, the Tostary wagonette drove up, and Mr Publius Park descended, paid his copper at the gate of the pier enclosure, and came up to where I was. I certainly could hardly have known him. He was pale as a sheet from the blood he had lost, strips of sticking-plaster extended from one side of his forehead to the other. The bridge of his nose was broken, and an eye in a jaundiced state. Altogether he looked like a prize-fighter who had lately passed through some terrible encounter, and his pompous manner, coupled with his utterly dilapidated condition, made him appear supremely ridiculous. He was in no amiable mood. As I learnt afterwards, his parting with M'Lucas had not been very pleasant, and the old savage had shown but scant sympathy with his troubles; had called him a fool for getting into them; and when poor Publius hinted at tender expectations with regard to the heiress, he was told, with a reference "to them as was pefore me," to go to Wabton or to Jericho, or even a hotter place.

"I am glad, Mr Gunter, to get out of this miserable country; it is no place for a Christian to live in. What can you indeed expect? There's not a church of my denomination in the whole district, and the establishment is worse than nothing. I tried a lecture, but you were there and know what came of it."

"Perhaps, sir, if you visit the district again things may go a little more pleasantly with you."

"No, no," said Publius, emphatically; "if I once get back to Wabton it will take a great deal to tempt me away. It's a fine place Wabton. When you are on your way to London you should go to see it, and if possible spend a Sabbath there. It's there you will hear the gospel trumpet. My minister, sir, is a splendid orator. We pay him three hundred a year. I myself contribute——"

Mr Park was here interrupted by a shout, and on turning round, I found we were observed by quite a little crowd of spectators, many of whom had clambered up the pier railings that they might obtain a better view. Dougal More had happened to be in Tomindoun that morning, and had spread the news of the arrival of the unfortunate Publius. In a very short time every idler in the village, and they were many, rushed to the pier to have a look at the man with whose exploits the country was ringing.

"That's the ——" cried Dougal More, elevating his whisky-reddened, weather-beaten face above the

paling. "That's him. He only give me wan sheeling for pulling him a whole tay upon Feeshinish."

"Is it him?" cried a tall virago, who had come from gutting herring, and who looked as if she might have been shedding human blood. "Is it him was wanting Miss M'Lucas? Set him up indeed."

"Mr Peerk a-hoy!" shouted a sailor-looking character in a tarpaulin hat. "Ye've had a collision and broken yer bowsprit; creat tamage to yer porthole and figure-head. Faith, it's the underwriters will lose by ye."

This sally seemed highly appreciated. Mr Park rose from off the barrel on which he was sitting, drew himself up, and shook his fist at the crowd menacingly.

"Give us a lecture," cried a man, who had evidently heard the Drissaig oration, imitating that famous performance. "Leedies and shentlemans, the hee-est steyle of airt is the idleistic. It's idle he's been himself to get that eye. It's to fight he tid—pring the polismans to him!"

"He's left his lass pehind him! Go home to your wab. Peefsteaks is good for te plack eye. Wha broke the gless—was it fou you was that time? Gosh, he's an awful looking feegure! His mither 'ill no ken him. It's to put him in the shail they'll do when he gets home!"

These and many other humorous, but not very

complimentary, expressions were sent across the paling by the grinning crowd.

"You're a set of savages," said Publius, hurling his defiance at them, as he retreated to the steamboat for the south, which came in while this interlude was proceeding. "You're a set of savages; worse than the heathen. You deserve to be treated and prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law."

A handful of mud came over the paling, which he narrowly escaped, and cut short his denunciations, and in a few moments more he was on board the departing boat, greeted with ironical cheers from his friends on shore.

"Really, Dougal," I ventured to remark to the boatman, "it's too bad of you to behave in that way to the gentleman."

"Shentleman, sir! Do ye call yon a shentleman? It's through the mill he would need to be put again pefore he'd pe that. He only give me wan sheeling for pulling whole day on Feeshinish, and not a single drap neither. Shentleman! it's no that kind I like whatever. Put I hope he'll no pe complaining me to Tostary. Deed I would not wonder. Here's the *Clansman* coming in; I will pe after putting your luggage on poard."

Every one who has sailed among the western islands knows the *Clansman*. A more comfortable vessel no man could sail in, and with all Highland travellers she is associated with many agreeable

memories. From Glasgow she comes round the stormy Mull of Cantire, where she has been battered in her time by many a fierce gale, and finds her way by Oban and the Sound of Mull and Skye to Stornoway, in the far-off island of Lewis. She calls at many places, and carries a varied cargo: goods for the various northern towns on her outward voyage, and on her return barrels of herrings, sheep and cattle. Her passengers are as varied as her cargo. Gentlemen of high degree on their way to and from their shootings, many parsons, Stornoway fishcurers, commercial travellers, stalwart farmers. No convivial meeting can well surpass that which takes place in her cabin at night when the lamps are lighted and the hot water is on the table. Experiences of the most varied kind are freely interchanged. His lordship listens with interest to the Free Kirk minister as he tells of how he voted at the "Sheneral Assembly" in the heresy case. The English squire relates confidentially to the Stornoway merchant of how he killed the best stag of the season on Cleishval. The farmer descants on the prices at Falkirk to the fishcurer, and receives in return an account of the number of crans of herring taken at Garabost; while Mr Sutherland the steward stands smiling at the doorway, the presiding genius of the scene. Then before they "turn in" there is an adjournment on deck for the final smoke, and just "to see where we are." Pipes are lit beside the funnel, the sailors and en-

gineers off duty gather round, and a little cheery parliament is held. Perhaps some of my readers, like the writer, can recall the scene. The deck passengers; the Highland women with shawls over their heads crouching beside the bulwarks; the cattle and sheep in their pens; the engineer standing in the ruddy glow of his fire; the regular beat of the engines; the dense volume of smoke blotting out the clear stars overhead; the flashing lighthouse far away; the dark loom of the land on either side; the grand vessel moving steadily on into the darkness. Long may the *Clansman* plough her way through the northern seas! And let me add also, long may her owners flourish, who have done so much to promote the comfort of the traveller. "We will drink, shentlemen, to the memory of David Hutcheson, and prosperity to M'Brayne."

Throughout the long summer day we sailed northwards from Tomindoun. The life on board, and the scenes at the different calling places, were so varied that I never wearied. Nothing could surpass the scenery. The wild headland of Ardnamurchan, the rugged coast of Sunart, the wild rocky harbour of Arisaig, the towering Scour of Egg, the serrated hills of Skye, and the glimpses of islands far away to the west lying in the sunshine. The company on board was of the usual description; friendly, sociable people of all the classes that make up Hebridean society. Of course there was the Stornoway "merchant," and the

beaming commercial traveller, and the minister in rusty black, with voluminous white neckcloth, and a hat that told of many encounters with western rainstorms. In converse with these the time glided swiftly by. At each calling place we put out much the same cargo—barrels of flour, boxes, and whiskey casks, and we took on board one or two Celts, male or female. As it was getting well on in the afternoon, the captain informed me that my landing place was at the next ferry. In a few minutes after this the great vessel stopped, the steam went off with a roar, a great broad-bottomed boat bumped against the side of the *Clansman*, manned by two wild looking Highlanders, with bare arms and streaming hair. Into this boat I was lowered, along with my portmanteau and gun case, the rope was let go, and in a moment more we were dancing on the surface of the great waves, raised by the ship as she sailed away.

On landing at a little stone pier I found a wagonette and pair of horses from Brex waiting me, and started at once for a drive of fourteen miles. We struck right away from the sea into the heart of the country. The road led from one wild glen into another. Not a house was visible from the time we left the shore, nor a sign of human habitation of any kind. A few twisted pines here and there, or some birch trees by the bank of a stream, were the only trees we saw. Great wastes, untenanted by man or sheep, stretched on every side, for this was forest

ground given over entirely to the pasturage of deer. Desolation reigned supreme. No one who has not visited the Highlands, or studied the subject, has probably any idea of the extent to which the north of Scotland has been turned into a hunting ground, and handed over to the tenancy of wild animals. Single forests often range in extent from ten to twenty miles broad. The traveller, starting into the moors on the southern borders of Perthshire, can almost walk on forest ground without a break to the western sea-board of Ross. From Deeside to Speyside he can walk over an hundred miles on end without meeting with any animal but deer. The number of these animals is enormous. Three thousand deer in a single forest is quite a common thing, but occasionally their number is even greater. In one the number of deer are computed at about five thousand. The rents obtained for deer shootings are enormous, reaching even above three thousand pounds a-year.

It was almost quite dark when we turned into a narrow valley, where a few white and slated cottages clustered together round a church and manse. A little further on we saw the lights of the lodge at Brex, and soon drew up at the door, where Mr Paul, who was taking his evening cigar with some friends, gave me a hearty welcome.

Brex stood on the banks of a broad but shallow river, the sound of which never ceased as it boiled and fought its way among great grey boulders of granite.

It was a small white house, very much in appearance like an ordinary Highland farm-house. Its accommodation was limited: it contained a drawing-room and dining-room, and one or two bedrooms. To make up for its limited space an ingenious device had been resorted to. Several cottages, some of wood covered with zinc, and a few of stone thatched with heather, stood on the space between the lodge and the river. These cottages were fitted up as bedrooms for the guests. When a man arrived, he was shown to his room in one of these outside places, the key was given him, and he was duly put in possession for as long as he cared to remain. At meal times a bell was rung, and the party gathered from their respective outhouses. Very snug were the rooms of these habitations: a deep soft arm-chair, a chest of drawers, a bed, and a bath constituted the furniture. The walls were papered with drawings from the *Graphic* and sketches from *Punch*, and were in themselves an amusing picture gallery, and an endless diversion in stormy weather. At night parties were formed in the various rooms; every man brought his own chair, and jest and song flowed on often until a late hour. The social charm of Brex was that everyone was free to do what he thought suited him best. Immediately after breakfast, there was what Mr Paul called morning parade on the green before the door. All the guests assembled, and the little company was encircled by a respectful array of stalkers and gillies,

waiting to be told off for duty. Then every man had to declare what he would do for the day. Some would go to the forest, some to fish, some to shoot grouse, some to potter about, some to sketch, some to write letters, some to drive with the ladies. After this Mr Paul delivered his orders.—"Peter!" "Yes, sir." "You will go with this gentleman and try Corryvanie. Duncan, you will show Mr —— the black pool below the school-house. Hector." "Yes, sir." "You will bring the ponies round at two o'clock. Donald." "Yes, sir." "You will get the dogs ready and try the flat below Balloch." After having thus settled the destiny of the guests until evening, Mr Paul often retired to his own room to spend the day in writing letters, for he was a regular man of business; but he was a keen sportsman also, and when he chose to go to the forest or river, he never had to chronicle a blank day.

I found a large number of people gathered at Brex, certainly of a very varied character. There was Sir Martin Musgrave, the well-known master of fox-hounds, and who was equally famous as a deer-stalker. There was Mr Viner, a thin little man, with a large turned-down collar, the Radical Member, as is well-known, for the borough of Bumpe. Mr Pistol, the great artist, was also there, with his unbarbered locks; and above all, a little Bishop in apron and gaiters—a solidly-built, ruddy-cheeked man with scant hair, with a fund of stories always at command, so that his

whereabouts on the premises could be known by the bursts of laughter that went off all round him. Add to these several Australian friends of the host, who seemed never tired of listening to the Bishop's wit; an old English Tory squire, Mr Longton, escaped from the clay beds of a midland county; and The O'Grogan, an Irish M.P., and you have an idea of the singular gathering at Brex. Nor must we forget the ladies of the party, though they were few in number. There was the sister of the host, a buxom happy-looking lady, who presided over the establishment; Mrs Grocote, the grave, thoughtful bishop's wife, with her grey hair and slight figure; and her two daughters, fair-haired, lively girls, to whom everything seemed "so nice!" "so charming!" There was also a German young lady, Miss Werther, in spectacles, ever ready to quote Goethe, and whose one aim seemed to be to drag the Bishop into metaphysical controversy on many theological questions, among others, as to the preferable doctrine of the immortality of the race to that of personal immortality. The good prelate parried her attacks always with the best of humour, but close observers could see that he was not altogether at his ease in the presence of Miss Werther, and got occasionally very much out of his depths when he attempted to solve some of the problems which she set before him.

We had some music in the drawing-room before retiring to what the gentlemen called their dens, and

Miss Werther sang one of the songs of her fatherland. There was also a very animated conversation carried on as to the day's proceedings, and everybody had some story to tell of where he had been and what he had seen. Above all the murmur of the talk could be heard the unceasing duet of the Bishop's girls.

So nice! So charming!

So charming! So nice!

"Did you see anything of that villainous parson when you were in the forest?" asked Sir Martin of the Squire.

"I did not. I think if I had, notwithstanding my respect for the Church, I should have given him a few drops."

"Better send the Lord Bishop to him, than that," said Mr Paul.

"The very thing the doctor ordered," interjected a stalwart Antipodean.

"If it's a ritualist you want me to bring to book, I will rather be excused," said his Lordship. "I've plenty of them to look after at home."

"Yes," sighed Mrs Grocote, "we have indeed great troubles in our diocese. This Public Worship Regulation Act, Mr Paul, is a cause of great anxiety."

"It's nothing so dreadful as that, Mrs Grocote," replied Paul, "though it is aggravating enough. A sporting clergyman has his glebe quite near here, over the river. There is scarcely a hoof or a feather on it, but my stags have often to cross it, on their way from

one part of the forest to another. The reverend gentleman may be often seen at daybreak lying in wait for his prey, and before they reach the march he often manages to shoot one or two, and when we go out we find the deer quite wild, and roaming about, and can't get within miles of them."

"It's infamous," groaned Sir Martin.

"He even," continued Paul, "left some corn out before his door, and shot a deer or two who came down to it. The only comfort I have is, that one dark morning he peppered his own pony. I've done everything with the fellow. I've written him, and interviewed him, and threatened him. Of course, I don't go to his church, though he is the minister of the parish. The only thing that now seems practicable is to send the Bishop to him. It is the last resort."

"I saw the parson yesterday," said the Honourable Mr Wynge, "a young gentleman with an eye-glass, and an affected lisp. I don't really think he is half a bad fellow. I think I'll go to his kirk on Sunday."

"Oh, do tell us about him," said the Miss Grocotes, "it is really so interesting."

"Well, I was fishing," said Mr Wynge, "on the other side of the river, when a thin slight gentleman, in a jockey-looking coat and white choker, came down, and ordered me off his property. I, of course, apologised humbly, and generally did the polite, and by

way of getting something to say, remarked that I thought we had been at the 'varsity about the same time. The man thawed at once. I don't suppose, you know, he ever was there, but it ended in my going up to his house. 'Pon honour, I feel the whiskey he gave me in my head yet."

"I did hear him in his church von Sunday. He vas not very profond. He does believe in de personal immortality. He is not de leebral clergyman. Vat do you think, Bishop, of de new releegion of Monoism, which Mr Haekel has propounded? It vil replace de antique dualistic anteleological conception of life and spirit."

"My dear young lady," cried the Bishop in anguish, "these are questions that are of excessive importance. They must not be lightly answered. I am far away from my books of reference at present. I advise you to read an able treatise by Archbishop Tonkin."

"I'll tell you what," said Mr Paul, coming to the rescue of his reverence, for whom Miss Werther was evidently preparing a rejoinder. "We will ask this parson to dinner, and heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Bishop shall be the bearer of the olive branch to-morrow. What say you, my Lord?"

The Bishop good naturedly assented.

"I will go any where, and see any body," said he, "if I can get away—"

"From Miss Werther!" interposed his wife. "Oh, Bishop! what a speech!"

"No, my dear, but from Haekel and Hegel, and Schopenhauer and Hartmann. What business has my dear Miss Werther to choose her friends among these wretched sceptics?"

"Fortunately for Miss Werther, Bishop," said Paul, "Dick Purden, our neighbour, admires these dry Germans, not to speak of his expressed admiration for Miss Werther herself, so we must have Dick over to dine along with the parson, if you can get his reverence to come."

After this the party broke up, or rather adjourned in two groups, to smoke and chat in the cottages. I was tired, and begged to be excused joining them that evening.

I had just closed the door of my room, and was studying the caricatures on the wall, when I heard a knock, and Mr Paul came in.

"Did you see anything," he said, "of Trant? I can't get him to go back to London, where I think his presence is very much needed at present about the company's affairs."

"Trant is very much, I think, devoted to Miss M'Lean at present, which perhaps accounts for his not returning to business."

"You astonish me," said Paul, "I have reason to know that Miss M'Lean has been long engaged to her cousin, an Edinburgh advocate. I am sorry for Trant if he is ignorant of this. Trant is a fine fellow all round, and will be sure to do well. It is a thousand

pities if he comes to grief. But I am keeping you out of bed. You are to go with Peter to Corry-na-Muick, at the far-off end of the forest to-morrow. Do you hear these fellows?"

This last allusion was to a roar of laughter in an adjoining hut, which died away in a series of intermittent explosions.

"The Bishop is in there," said Paul. "He dearly loves a cigar."

## CHAPTER XII.

### IN THE FOREST.

AFTER breakfast next morning Peter and I set off for Corry-na-Muick. Sir Martin Musgrave and Mr Grey were to try some of the corries nearer home. I rode a little black hardy Highland pony, and Peter walked beside me. Another pony with a pack saddle, led by a young lad rejoicing in the name of Black Duncan, followed. Peter was a tall, wiry Highlander, dressed in grey homespun. Though over fifty years of age, he strode along with light step, and the pony could hardly keep up to him. We crossed the river above Brex, leaving the high road above the manse and church which I had noticed the previous evening. Peter pointed at the former with a very strong expression.

"That's where that —— lives. He was out with his gun this morning. I heard two shots just when I was leaving the house, and he never misses. I doubt the shentlemen will get little in the low corries to-day, the deer will be that wild. It's a —— shame the Presbytery allows him to go on the way he's doing."

"Well, Peter, we've sent the Bishop to see him to-day, and I hope he will bring him to his senses."

"If you would send the Apostle Paul to him, he wouldn't do yon man any good!"

From the river we ascended the hill by a gravelled pathway, and continued by it for six or seven miles till it suddenly came to an end; we then dismounted, and the ponies were hobbled, that is to say, their fore-feet were tied together, and they were allowed to graze about at will. It was a wonderful view from where we left the horses. As far as we could see there was nothing but desolate wastes and black lakes here and there. The glen below us seemed a narrow chasm—the river like a silver thread. The forest of Brex was very extensive, and bordered with other large forests on every side. It was almost impossible to count the number of deer pertaining to it. There were certainly two thousand, but when the Comrich forest, or that of Strath, were well shot over, many deer crossed over to Brex, which afforded them, from the general lie of the ground, a kind of sanctuary. There were many deep corries in Brex where deer could remain almost the whole year without being disturbed.

Peter sat down on the heather, unslung his telescope, and swept the whole ground, but shut up the glass with a snap clearly indicating dissatisfaction.

"There's nothing but a wheen hinds out by yonder; not a single stag in sight. We'll need to go to near the far off march, I'm thinking."

We accordingly struck into the heather, and had

walked along for about a couple of miles, Peter leading, and Black Duncan following with the rifle under his arm, when suddenly Peter threw himself down on his face, and obeying a motion of his hand we did the same. He then took out his glass and looked through it intently at one object.

"Ay that's him—he's there sure enough," he whispered. I took the glass, but for a time could make out nothing; at last guided by Peter I made out two hinds feeding on the off side of a burn.

"Look now sir, a wee down, and nearer the burn nor them hinds, and you'l hev him, and a rael good one he is. I'm thinking he'l have come over from Strathy, where they've been shooting very steady this month past. He's a good few stone yon one, and he's a fine head too."

I now made out the Stag. He was lying in the position Peter indicated. All I could see of him was his head above the heather, and occasionally he scratched his neck with one of his hind legs. He was evidently taking his siesta. The hinds were feeding above him. We now held hurried consultation as to whether it was possible to get near him.

"It will be a long stalk," said Peter; "but I've seen many as hard to do. We must first go back a bit the way we came; you see the burn takes a bend this way. If we can get into the bed of the burn, without them winding us, it's our only chance."

We retreated silently to where we left the ponies;

not far from where they were feeding, the burn bent round and we got into the channel. There was no water in it, though in winter a strong stream must run along it. On one side, that on which the deer were feeding, the bank rose high, and was fringed with long heather; on the other it was low and gravelly. Along the bed of the torrent we worked our way, occasionally we could stand almost upright when the bank rose well above us, but the most part of the distance we had to go on all fours. I seemed to have been creeping along for hours in this way, but so great was the excitement that I never thought of fatigue. Sometimes we came to a deep black pool, there was nothing for it but to let ourselves noiselessly into the water, and hold on by the stones on the bank. At length Peter came to a halt, and noting the spot where we had first seen the deer, took his bearings, and felt sure he was not far off. He threw himself flat against the side of the burn, parted the long heather above him and looked through the screen. Silently closing the opening, he motioned me to his side, and made me part the heather again; there at about seventy yards above where we were standing were the three hinds. The stag must be nearer. At last I made out the point of an antler above a small tuft of moss. He was still resting. Under Peter's direction, I got the rifle into position. He then gave a slight whistle. The hinds trotted down to where he was lying, and up he got and looked round, his head

well thrown back. What a magnificent animal he looked! I covered him well, and fired. I distinctly heard the ball strike him, but he went off followed by the hinds at a good pace, and I fired the other barrel at him, just as he was going out of sight.

"I'm feared you've missed him, Sir," said Peter, despondingly, as we leapt up the bank of the burn.

I felt sure this was not the case, and on getting upon his track, I pointed out to the stalker, blood on the heather.

"We'll heve him yet," he cried, as he rushed in pursuit. "He'll no go far with a spout of blood like that from him. I wish we hed the dogs, Duncan, but Mr Paul doesn't like them to be taken oot."

On we tore like men possessed through bogs and quagmires, where we sank over the knees, round the shoulder of the hill, where the deer disappeared; on the other side was some gravel and trees. Peter pointed out marks where the animal had rolled over.

"We'll have him yet, Sir; come on doun the hull."

How I "came on" I don't know. I seemed to go over the ground in a succession of flying leaps, and Duncan was soon left behind. At the bottom of the hill was a little run of water, and we came again on the track of the stag in the soft moss through which it ran. He was evidently in difficulties, and had scarcely been able to extricate himself from the bog. Above this was a ridge covered with long heather.

"Dod," said Peter, gaining the top of this ridge, "he can't be far off now."

He had hardly said this when up got the stag below us, and went off at a rattling pace. I got a snap shot at him, and felt convinced I hit him, but he still went on almost as if he was unhurt. Then our chase recommenced, and continued till we came to the broad channel of a mountain stream similar to that we had left. The poor animal had got into this, but hadn't strength to ascend the opposite bank; there he stood gazing at us defiantly.

"Nothing for it, Sir, but another shot. Be sure this time."

I was just taking a steady aim,—though after the race it wasn't easy to do so,—when the noble animal suddenly rolled over stone dead.

"He'll travel to Strath no more that one," said Peter, taking out his knife and leaping down upon the prostrate animal to garalloch him. He then shouted to black Duncan to go back for the pony, and commenced, with my aid, to drag the animal on to the bank. He was a grand stag, of eight points.

"I'll take a bet he'll weigh a good few stun that one. Dod, Sir, you'll pe the better for a wee drap after the race."

I was indeed the better for it. I was wet through up to the waist, and covered with mud, and altogether a very unpresentable figure; but my joy was great as I thought of my success; how Ted will envy me

when I tell him about it all, was the thought that passed through my mind. Duncan was soon round with the pony carrying the pack-saddle. It was too late in the day for any more sport; so lifting the stag on to the saddle, and strapping him up tightly, we commenced our triumphal march home. I was so wet that I thought it safer to walk than to ride, and I had the benefit in that way of Peter's conversation. He told me many yarns and legends of the forest—of the big stag that Lord Mamore shot in Corrypot; of the white hart that used to be seen in Gleneak; of the charmed stag of the Comrich.

"Yes, Sir; I saw him shot at many times, and the ball seemed just to glint off him same as off iron. I heard tell he was killed by a poacher, who put a silver sixpence into his gun. He was nearly a hundred years old. They knew by the marks was on him."

So, conversing, we reached the river, and crossed to the high road, where Mr Paul met us, and walked back with us to Brex. He seemed pleased with my day's luck. The other two gentlemen had come home empty-handed; the parson had been too many for them. As for myself, I felt quite triumphant, and discoursed rapturously to Paul on the glories of the sport.

"You had better say little about that," he replied, "till you hear the other side of the question. Our neighbour, Dick Purden, the 'highland radical' as we call him, comes to dinner to-morrow night, and he

will try and make you believe that deer-stalking is one of the great political sins of the time. Here we are at home. The dinner bell will ring in half-an-hour. You will need all your time to get ready. You certainly seem to have carried away a good deal of my peat bog on your person."

We were taking our seats at the table when the Bishop bustled in, just in time to say grace. He looked somewhat put out, and his countenance had lost its ruddy, benevolent glow.

"Well, Bishop," said Paul, looking up the table, "how did you get on with the parson?"

"My dear sir," replied he, "I cannot tell you the story until I have recruited myself with strengthening food. I've been, indeed, in perilous places since I saw you."

"I'm thinking," said the O'Grogan, "the parson has wiped his eye for 'm."

"It's positively infamous the conduct of that man," said Sir Martin. "Is there no church authority to whom we could appeal? I suppose there are no bishops in Scotland; but isn't there a dean or something? Positively the stags were running about the corries like mad."

"Oh, my dear Sir Martin," said Mrs Grocote, "the days of church authority are by. The bishops are defied. It is indeed sad; they've put two clergymen in prison for contumacy."

"I wish to hivin, ma'm," said the O'Grogan, "they'd

put a lot more in; the praists over in Oirland won't give me any rist at all."

"I took a sketch of the parson's manse and kirk to-day, but I didn't see his reverence," said Mr Pistol.

"Oh, how charming! how interesting!" chimed the Miss Grocotes. So the dinner wore on to a close, and the decanters were placed on the table.

"Now! now for it, Bishop!" cried Paul.

"Hear! hear!" responded the two members of Parliament, in the usual House-of-Commons tone, and the Australians prepared themselves for unlimited laughter.

"Well, well!" said his lordship, "I don't believe a bishop has been treated as I have been since the time of the covenant."

"Good! good!" cried the Australians, "Ho! ho!"

"I took my way, as you are aware, along the road, and crossed the river by the drawbridge; thence I walked up to the parsonage or manse, and knocked at the door, which was opened by the servant-maid. By the way, Paul, there are some magnificent heads all round the porch. I saw two royals, I did, really!"

Paul said something in the gruffest tones, which it was perhaps as well was inaudible.

"The maid-servant, in reply to my enquiry whether the minister was at home, said—'Ou aye, he's in, but he's no in the hoose, he's in the barn,

skinning the twa beasts that he shot this morning east the glebe. If ye gang round the corner of the hoose ye'll maybe find him.' I accordingly bent my steps as she directed, and looked in at an open door, which I supposed was the barn, and there, Paul, suspended from the cross beams, were two heavy stags. The parson was in the act of skinning one of them, and was so occupied that he did not observe me. So I rapped gently on the door with my stick, and the man came and stood before me with the bloody knife in his hand. I must say he hadn't much of the clergyman about his appearance, though you know we, my dear friends, mustn't judge from appearance."

"Good!" cried one of the Australians. "Ho! ho!" chorused the others.

"He is a slim man, with a head of hair all standing on end, like a great house-broom; he wore a vest and trousers of brown homespun, and the only clerical thing about him was a white band round his throat. His hands and face were smeared with blood. He looked at me as coolly as if he had a bishop visiting him every day of the week."

"You're the Bishop of Watton," he said.

"Yes," I replied; thinking, in my innocence, that here was an opening for conversation. "So you recognise me?"

"Yes; I heard you preach once in the Temple church. It was on 'Heaven;' you didn't seem to know more about it than we do down here."

"Oh, my dear sir," said I, "it is a very mysterious subject."

"Good!" cried the Australians. "Ho! Ho!"

"But I need not dwell on that further. I'm on a very pleasant visit to your beautiful glen, and I thought I would venture to pay you a visit."

"I should have thought, my Lord," said he loftily, "that you would have had plenty to do at home. If I may judge from the public prints, your diocese is in a state of anarchy. Aren't there two of your clergymen at present *rotting* in prison!"

"Oh! Bishop," said Mrs Grocote plaintively, "he *didn't* say that? Oh, what an unfeeling man!"

"I must say I thought him so, and answered him a little more tartly than I ought," said the Bishop; "I should perhaps have remembered that charity covers a multitude of faults."

"Good! good!" chorussed the Australians.

"Sir," I said, "the Scripture we both teach tells us that we should be slow to discern our neighbour's shortcomings, and consider the beam that is in our own eye before we pretend to take the mote out of another's. What are these animals I see there? have they not been obtained by improper practice, by—pardon me for saying it, but it is best to be plain—by poaching?"

"My Lord," said he, brushing back his bristly hair and tossing up his head, "I shot both these animals on my own property this morning. Mr Paul's pro-

perty is on that side of the river and mine is on this; but as you like plain speaking I will give you some. Isn't it true that you held a service at Brex last Sunday?"

"It is," I replied with some surprise. "I held a mission service."

"Exactly! exactly!" said he, ironically; "a *mission* service, as if we are a lot of heathens. My Lord, it's you that is the poacher."

"What do you mean?" I said.

"Mean! well I mean this. You are a minister of the state, paid by the state to do certain duties in England, which you don't do, and yet you come into my parish here, and without asking my leave proceed to hold a conventicle. You're a poacher, my Lord; a low ruffian of a poacher!"

"Sir! sir! you are insolent," I cried.

"Keep your airs," was his rejoinder, "for your miserable starved curates, they don't go down here. You're a poacher, my Lord; you're something worse even than that."

"What am I?"

"You're a *dissenter*," he said.

"Oh, papa dear! dear papa!" almost shrieked the two fair-haired daughters; "*did* he really call you that?"

"He did indeed," said the Bishop in a horrified tone.

"By Jove!" said Sir Martin.

"You're a low beggarly dissenter," he repeated, "and if you don't take yourself off I'll send my dog after you."

"I was so taken aback," said the Bishop, "by being called by so opprobrious an epithet, that I retired, I am afraid, without much dignity. As I was nearing the bridge I heard a shout after me—

"'Tell Mr Paul, my Lord, with my compliments, that if he is run short of venison at any time, I'll be most happy to supply him.'"

"I never was so treated in my life before. The man is a ruffian. Just fancy if the Archbishop hears I was called a *dissenter*. I believe legally I am one in Scotland. A dissenter, a low beggarly dissenter, the fellow said. The Episcopal bench will never let me hear the end of it."

"You must not, however, take this clergyman as a pattern of our Scottish parson, my Lord," said Paul. "Mr Gunter can bear me out when I say that as a rule they are admirable men. But whatever am I to do about my poor deer; they'll all be massacred in cold blood?"

"And what am I to do about my poor *dear* papa," said the elder Miss Grocote, going up to him and patting him on the shoulder caressingly. "Did the bad man call him a dissenter, did he?"

"A low beggarly dissenter, Julia; see what your poor father has come to."

"Good! good!" cried the Australians. "Ho! Ho!"

"I must not forget to say, however," said the Bishop, "before the ladies leave us, that I met a very excellent fellow on the road, who acted like a Samaritan; he took me into his house and gave me much-needed refreshment. I think he said his name was Purden."

"That's Dick Purden, our Highland Radical," said Paul; "he is coming to dine to-morrow and bring his fiddle."

"The very man, doubtless," said his Lordship. "He told me in a friendly manner that he thought it would be for the benefit of the Church if the bishops were excluded from the House of Lords; but I must say his port was excellent. I don't know when I enjoyed a glass of wine so much. He played me some curious music on the violin he called strathspeys. I must honestly own they were not so good as his port: an honest excellent fellow. He had also some admirable Stilton; but I should say the port was '34."

After this there was an adjournment of the gentlemen to Mr Pistol's room to inspect his sketches and close the evening; but before we sat down big Peter came round with a lanthorn to ask us to come to the larder and see the stag. It was well worth going to see: a fine fat animal. "I weighed him," said Peter; "he just turns eighteen stun. It's the best beast was killed this season. Deed I am tired, taking the skin off him."

"You would be the better of a dram, I daresay, after your labours," said Paul, taking the hint.

"Deed I would not be the worse whatever, sir; but I tell you, shentlemen, yon minister on the other side the river is shust worse than a papist."

Now a *papist* represents the lowest form of religious belief many highlanders can conceive.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE HIGHLAND RADICAL.

I WAS stiff and tired after the stalk and race of the previous day. Every bone in my body seemed to have its own special ache, and I was glad to hear next morning that there was to be no stalking for a day.

"The deer in the low corries, owing to the parson's performances," said Paul, "have become so wild that it is hopeless to stalk them. I fear they will end in leaving the ground altogether. I was up early this morning speaking to Peter, and he thinks we had better have a deer drive in Corrie-na-Shealg. It is, I think, the best thing we can do. Peter and some gillies have gone round to Tay-na-Moil, and we are to be in our places by eleven o'clock. He thinks he will have a good few deer down the pass by that time."

This was agreed to, and all shooters left the lodge about ten o'clock,—Sir Martin, an Australian, the member for Bumpe, the Squire, The O'Grogan, Paul, and myself. The others went to fish, or otherwise spend their time. The two Miss Grocotes and the Bishop were to drive up to a tarn among the hills,

accompanied by Pistol, who was to make some sketches.

The company of sportsmen crossed the wooden bridge, and took their way along the road near the manse. The parson was standing on the gravel walk before his door, and eyed us with a sardonic grin. A curious looking figure he seemed, one we would much more readily associate with "Tattersal's corner" than the church; especially the sober Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

"Be jabers," said The O'Grogan, "I never was so timpted to commit murder in me life!"

"Peter tells me," said Paul, "that his reverence got nothing this morning. The deer weren't down, so we may, perhaps, have a better chance of sport in consequence."

From the manse we struck up a narrow glen for about a couple of miles, and entered the pass, at the mouth of which we deposited Sir Martin, duly concealed behind a huge boulder of granite. The pass was a wide rocky saddle-shaped hollow between two hills; it was also the division between two corries. It could be covered easily by guns on either side. Deer coming from the one corry to the other were bound to cross it, and it was a very favourite route with them. Little skilfully constructed turf erections marked the best posts for the sportsmen, and behind one of them I was placed, with directions how to fire. A gillie lay beside me, stretched at full length on the

ground, with a spare rifle. The others of the party then went on their way to their different stations. It was a weird and silent scene that I looked out upon. The day was calm, and there was no movement of any kind. After a time, I felt my leg pulled, and the gillie pointed down the pass, with a grin on his countenance. I soon saw what excited his laughter. A fox with a rabbit in his mouth was coming briskly along. A fine dog fox he was, with a splendid brush; he trotted by within a few yards of where we were utterly unsuspecting the presence of foes. After this, half-an-hour passed, and my leg was tugged again, and the gillie pointed upward. Above us soared three eagles, evidently two old birds and an eaglet. They were high up, but we could hear their curious whistling cry. Then a black raven sat on a rock opposite us, and croaked lustily. Still no appearance of deer, and I began to think we should soon be relieved of our watch. Then I heard a shot away to the right. The gillie gave my foot a good pull this time, and rubbed his hands most gleefully. I now knew the deer were near. Soon a hind came up, stood on the ridge a moment, and trotted away past us, within a couple of yards. She was succeeded by a stag, who stood for a moment in the same way, and then came down the pass at full gallop. He seemed to have a dread of our ambush, for he took the off-side of the hollow. I got him well covered, and over he went with a crash, digging his antlers into the earth. Rapidly after him

came a large herd pell mell, nearly two hundred stags and hinds; firing was for a few moments incessant to the right and left as they rushed by. It was a splendid sight. When they came near Sir Musgrave's ambush they scattered, and streamed away in all directions, going off at full speed. I was fortunate enough to get three stags. Altogether there were fourteen deer killed, and it was pleasant to know that no wounded animal got off. Peter, who had superintended the drive, now came up with the ponies and the rest of the gentlemen, and the deer were one after another garalloched and carried off.

"You've done fine, shentlemen, whatever," said Peter, as we went down the pass, "and I'm thinking it's not many more that minister fellow will get after this."

"I'm afraid Peter," replied our host, "it's not many more we will get ourselves the rest of the season, our sport for the year is over; we might have had good stalking here for a month to come if the deer had been left alone, but now Peter all we can do is to console ourselves with a dram."

"Ay sir, there's worse consolations nor that! Hoot, toot, dinna fill it, sir, or I'll be just like John M'Pherson of the Torrans, you know he was advised to try glasses for his eyesight. 'Deed, says he, they are a great improvement, whatever; I took four, and faith I can see double after them!' Your health, shentlemen, and confounding to the meenister!"

"Arn't you afraid of a judgment," said I, "speaking in that way of the clergy, Peter!"

"Well sir, in a general way I like the clergy very well, but no this one; we have no many fine meenisters in this country, and there's some uses the paper terrible, and I canna thole them at all."

"Why? Peter."

"Och, if the meenisters canna remember their own sermons, how can they expect us to remember them!"

"Ho! ho!" said the Australian, "I must tell that to the Bishop."

"Ay, I think he's a fine bit man, yon Bishop. He has a ferry divartin coontenance whatever. He gied us a fine bit sermont last sabbath, though he hed the paper, and read his prayer."

"I suppose Peter," said Mr Paul, "you don't go to church after we go away, any more than you do when we are here."

"Ow, aye! I gang whiles. I like to gang to the kirk, shentlemen. There's nothing really does me so much good as to get up early on the Sabbath, and hear a populous meenister dispense with the gospel. But there's no many populous meenisters in these parts. There's no a good shot among them all. They're full of wind. Their sermons is just like poor Ranald the beggar's clothes. 'What are they made of?' says one to him! 'Deid,' says Ranald, 'the most of them's made of fresh air.'"

We got to Brex a short time before dinner, for we

walked smartly home from the forest. The Bishop and his party had just come back, and to every one of us, the fair-haired girls in turn, described the beauty of their drive and the scenery.

"Oh, *so* beautiful, *so* lovely."

"Be sure and tell Frank all about it, Julia," said the honest Prelate. "I really haven't time to write him, and I say, tell him—"

"What, Papa!"

"Tell him that I was called a low beggarly dissenter, but he isn't to mention it to any one."

Now Frank was the Bishop's chaplain, and was to be married some time during winter to Miss Julia Grocote.

I went off professedly to write letters in my hut, but in reality to take some rest, for the unusual fatigue told upon me. I soon fell into a sound slumber, from which I was only awoke by the first bell for dinner, which a man-servant rang loudly on the green before the house. When I got dressed and entered the drawing-room, everybody had assembled, and among them the Highland Radical, Dick Purden, of whom we had all heard.

Mr Purden was a man turned forty. His ancestors were Lowland, but he had been brought up all his life in the Highlands, and spoke Gaelic fluently. He was a great big-boned man over six feet in height. He wore a curiously-cut beard. His cheeks were close shaved, but below his chin he carried an hirsute

appendage that could only be compared to a square door-mat, and which wagged back and forward with every facial movement, like a lid upon hinges. He farmed some land belonging to a neighbour of Mr Paul's, and had done so to some advantage, for he meditated retiring altogether, and spending the rest of his life free from business cares. He was not on very good terms with his neighbours, indeed he could not well be other than isolated from them, owing to the whole tone of his life. For one thing, he committed what in the Highlands is regarded an unpardonable sin. He never went to any place of worship, or, as he was fond of putting it, "*darkened* a church door." In fact, he seemed rather to pride himself on his singularity in this respect, and was fond of letting his neighbours, who frequented public ordinances, know that he rather considered them a set of hypocrites. Naturally enough his neighbours did not altogether like to be so esteemed. The antagonism between himself and the society of the district was deepened by a quarrel with his landlord, or rather with the factor, who refused him compensation for some money he had laid out on improvements, and the frail tie that bound him to the little world of the glens was almost entirely severed after he formed the acquaintance of a professor of political economy, who had fishings a few miles from his farm. This gentleman introduced him to the writings of Spencer, Stuart Mill, and Lewis, and in the study of these

works, relieved by the practice of the violin and the perusal of Robert Burns, whom he almost worshipped, he passed his solitary life, growling and grumbling at the constitution of the universe. He gradually gained the character of being an eccentric bachelor, and many stories were current regarding his peculiarities. One of these was a singular love for answering advertisements. Several London quacks must have made quite a little fortune from ministering to his ailments, and the postmistress at the Clachan used to tell with wonder how many chemical compounds for the cure of baldness reached him through the post. The latter had not been very successful. The crown of his head remained bare as a billiard ball, but the hair by which it was fringed had assumed a marvellous and indescribable colour from the application of many cunning specifics. Since Mr Paul's arrival in the Glen, Dick had assumed a new role, and had come quite out into the world under the influence of Miss Werther's intellectual converse. He had found her one day, poised on one of the huge stepping-stones that spanned the stream near Brex, unable to go back or forward, and had gallantly dashed into the water and carried her across in his arms. This adventure was the beginning of a strong friendship. He came often to Brex to perfect his acquaintance with German, and having been led by his fair instructress to study Schopenhauer, he adopted quite the tone of a pessimist, and spoke of nervana as the desirable goal for

humanity. He was a good fellow, however, at bottom, Dick, and if you could once get through the hard shell in which he had got incased, you found a warm heart beneath. If you said anything in the least of a pathetic character he was touched at once, and would jump up and wring you by the hand with a grip of iron, and a face indicative of strong emotion, though the moment before he had been talking like a Robespierre or Danton.

On this occasion he appeared in the highest spirits, his face beaming with good humour, and indicative of anything but pessimism. He wore a large open shirt front, with ponderous gold studs, and a ruff which protruded from it like the keel of an upturned ship. Dinner passed quietly enough. Miss Werther and Mr Purden talked mainly of the possibility of the theory of Helmholtz being true—that the first germs of life were derived from some other world and borne to this earth on cosmical matter; but, on the whole, they were inclined to believe, with Haeckel, that as the planet cooled, atoms of carbon, sulphur, hydrogen, and nitrogen accidentally combined to form a plastidule of albumen, which became a living monera! Mrs Grocote, who was on the other side of Dick, listened to these amusing theories with a face of horror, and appealed more than once to the bishop to come to the rescue of the Mosaic narrative. That amiable prelate, however, was not to be drawn into theological discussion, and showed deep interest in the

management of Sir Martin Musgrave's foxhounds, and quite agreed with the baronet and the midland squire that when fox-hunting ceases to be a national pastime, England's glory will have departed. When the decanters were placed on the table, however, he inclined his rubicund countenance towards Mr Purden.

"I was telling," he said, "our worthy friend, Mr Paul, that you gave me an excellent glass of port yesterday. I ventured to make the guess that it was *thirty-four*; it very much resembles some in the cellar of my college at Oxford."

"I am glad you liked it, Bishop," replied Purden, simply, "there is plenty more where it came from. I got a lot in reply to an advertisement in the *Times*. It cost me twenty-four shillings a dozen."

"By Jove!" said Sir Martin.

"On me life!" said the O'Grogan.

The face of the Bishop grew almost pale, with the hue seen in cases of sea-sickness; and it was a considerable time before he recovered his usual equanimity. Fortunately, he had taken the poison a day before, so that it must be innocuous, or I believe he would have sought immediate medical assistance. By way of a diversion, I asked Mr Purden about the minister who had occupied lately so much of our conversation.

"I never go near him," said he. "He told us once in his gaelic sermon that we would be all in hell, like herrings packed in a barrel; and since then I lie in bed till late on Sunday, and think of nervana."

"He is not leebral, the clergyman; he do believe in de personal immortality," said Miss Werther.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Mrs Grocote. "*Do* you hear that, Bishop?"

The Bishop thus recalled to active duty, looked gravely down the table, waiting to cut in; and he soon got his opportunity.

"Of course," said Purden, "you'll all think me wrong; but I regard the whole business as a misfortune. Let a man live out his life and obey the laws of his being. What is called religion now-a-days seems to me a great mistake."

"And yet," said the Bishop, "how beautifully your own noble poet Burns has said—

> 'When ranting round in pleasures ring
> Religion may be blinded,
> Or if she gi'e a random sting
> It may be little minded.
>
> But when o'er life we're tempest driven,
> And conscience but a canker,
> A correspondence fixed with heaven
> Is sure a noble anchor.'"

The Bishop recited this with deep feeling, and with the oratorical power for which he is so well known in the House of Lords. It was curious to see the effect on the big man. His eyes filled, and when the speaker was done, he rose quietly and went round to his chair.

"Gi'e us your hand, mon; you're an honest fellow."

The Bishop extended his hand, which was so

squeezed, that he had evident difficulty in repressing a cry of pain. The huge episcopal ring that he wore was driven into his flesh as with the grasp of a vice.

"The bishop weally scored one with Burns," whispered the Honourable Mr Wynge to the youngest Miss Grocote, for whom he had a decided *tendresse*, as the ladies passed out of the dining-room.

"Now, Mr Purden," said Paul, "when Mr Gunter was praising deer-stalking rapturously yesterday, I told him you could give him the other side of the question. I pray you to disillusion him; for I am sorry to say he leaves us to-morrow."

"I know well," said Purden, "it is hard to make people take in what is against their own interest and pleasure, but the whole forest system is an abomination. To the credit of deer I would place desolation, some carcases of venison, a few keepers and gillies, demoralisation, poaching, with its concomitants, assaults, shedding of blood, and a visit for a couple of months of Mr Sportsman and his friends."

"By Jove," said Sir Martin.

"To the debit side," continued Purden, "there will appear population, agriculture, corn, cattle, sheep, a happy and contented peasantry, and the absence of crime, with a resident gentry. If any one can't see which is better for the country, his head must be made of curious material."

"What do you mean about the contented pea-

santry?" said Sir Martin, "there are none about here that I can see."

"No, they are not here, sir, but they were here. There were many happy homesteads once in this glen; and large sheep farms now given over to wild animals. I tell you there are 3000 square miles of productive land set apart for deer; and if a square mile contains 640 acres, we have a grand total of 1,920,000 acres, nearly one-tenth of the whole land of old Scotland given up to the gratification, pride, and vanity of a small class, and I may safely add, a class whose extinction would not in the very slightest degree affect the well-being of the empire."

"By Jove!" said Sir Martin, with deep feeling.

"Then I understand," said the honourable member for Bumpe, who had been listening with the idea of possibly making some political capital out of the question, "you point at the forest land being really good grazing ground, and that the loss to the country in general is enormous, from it's not being so used."

"I do, sir. I know four forests that would carry 30,000 sheep, and I would like to know what the country has gained for their loss. It would be better if you sportsmen would take yourselves off to the Rocky Mountains and hunt buffalo, and leave the Highlands altogether."

"But weally," said the Hon. Mr Wynge, adjusting his eye-glass, "what are our hard-worked legislators

to do for want of recreation if you take away our north Highland sport?"

Purden glared at him wildly.

"Do!" he almost shouted, "Are your enervated constitutions of such value to the nation that a tenth of Scotland must be made over to you for your amusement and relaxation, forsooth?"

"But what enormous rents," said Sir Martin, testily, for he was evidently in a state of deep disgust, "these forests bring; what an immense rise that gives in the value of property."

"Yes, it puts some money, no doubt, into the pockets of the landlords, who spend the most of it in the south, either in frivolity, or in paying interest on mortgages, but the country is little the better of it. Look here, I made a calculation, and I'll tell you what it is, deer *versus* sheep shows a gain annually in favour of the proprietors of £16,500, and a yearly loss of £343,000 to the nation.

"But I'm sure, now," said Sir Martin, "we sportsmen do a great deal for the people of the district; we at least had nothing to do with those who were sent away. We give them venison, and when do your farmers give them mutton; we give employment, and we pay them capital wages as keepers and gillies."

"I'll tell you, sir, the benefit the people get from you—the deer eat their crops, and they get no compensation; and if they get a little venison now

and again, it has been fattened at their expense. Let me tell you also, that much venison doesn't go their way, it is the sportsman's dogs get most of it. You don't employ many people either. I know of a farm having a sheep stock of 5000 head; it gives permanent employment to seven shepherds, six hands at clipping, twelve smearers for six weeks, three extra hands at wintering, and three extra at lambing. A similar extent of ground under deer gives permanent employment to three keepers, and during the shooting season to three or four extra hands in the shape of gillies."

"Didn't I tell you, Gunter," said Paul, "there was another side?"

"I should say so," cried Dick, "and what does your money do but demoralise these idiots of gillies in their kilts and knickerbockers. They despise honest work while their money lasts, and always end in becoming idle loafers, and going generally to the devil."

"But, my dear Mr Purden," said the Bishop, who had been listening uneasily to these revolutionary sentiments, can't a landowner do what he likes with his own?"

"I will answer you in words which ought to carry some weight with you, at least. 'The profit of the earth is for all. This is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes, and their eyelids are lifted up. This is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their

jaw teeth as knives, to *devour the poor* from off the earth, and the needy from among men.'"

"Really, Mr Purden," said the Radical M.P. for Bumpe, "I am delighted to meet you. We must ventilate these things in the House. I wish you were one of us. 'Pon honour, if you stand for a seat in one of our boroughs, I shall do my best to get the *party* to give you a lift."

"Will you? you're an honest man—give us your hand," cried Dick, in ecstacy.

"I think we have had enough politics for one night," said Paul, "let us join the ladies, and there is a little *function* to go through outside, which always closes a deer drive."

The function was certainly a singular performance. On the green were laid all the slain deer, around them were the gillies and keepers, and all the inmates of the establishment, holding torches and lanthorns. The gentlemen and ladies, and all the domestics, male and female, were present. Whisky was liberally served. Dick Purden sat on the top of a cask playing the violin, with all his heart and soul, while reels and strathspeys were being danced. Gillies danced with ladies, gentlemen with maid-servants. It was a wild barbaric scene. The Bishop was the only spectator, and he viewed the scene with an air of mild surprise. As the dancing grew vigorous, and the shouts louder, I saw Mr Wynge whisper to a big fat cook, and slip something into her hand. A moment

afterwards she dashed at the Bishop, and whirled him into the mazes of the Reel of Tulloch—probably the only instance in history in which a shovel hat and apron took part in that inspiriting performance. His Lordship, however, bore it all in good part, and his spindle shanks capered up and down with great vigour for a few moments.

"Dear! dear!" I heard him say at the close of the function. "Well has Horace written 'Prudens futuri temporis exitum calignosâ nocte premit deus.' Who would have imagined that, within two days, I, a bishop of the Church of England, should be called a low beggarly dissenter, that I should drink port at twenty-four shillings a dozen, and dance a reel with a cook! I do hope the bench won't hear of it, and especially Peters. He'd skin me like one of the minister's deer!"

This was the last I heard of the Bishop. I took farewell of the party, for I was to return next day to Stronbuy, and had to start before daybreak.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE "MAN."

I SEEMED hardly to have got into bed when Peter came into the hut to rouse me up, bearing in his hand a cup of hot coffee. It was pitch dark, and desperately cold, and all my wrappings were needed to keep me warm in the dog-cart. Peter escorted me with a lanthorn to the conveyance, threw in a leg of venison, and promised to send the head of the stag I had shot on my first day in the forest to Mr Snowie at Inverness.

"There is a man, sir," he said, as I bade him farewell, "going with you to catch the steamboat—Calum Brochkair his name is, and an old poacher he is too. He is going the length of Oban."

I forgot all about my companion, who was seated behind me, until, about daybreak, I heard a curious scratching noise in a box under my feet.

"What in earth is that?" I said.

"They is," said the man on the back seat, "some young foxes that I am taking south for Sir Martin. He is terrible fond to get them for the hunting."

"Where did you get them?"

"I got them out by at Glaslain in the forest, and a great work I had with them. I got first the dog and then the bitch in the straps, and dug out the young ones. I've killed more nor a thousand of them."

"I suppose there are a good many out on the hills. I saw one myself at the deer drive."

"Och, there's too many of them; you see the shentry are ferry fond of the foxes in the forest, for they keep down the grouse, and grouse do not do with the shootin' of the deers, they put the fright on them when they rise; put it is ferry hard upon the poor man, for the foxes is ferry fond of the lambs and will go long way for them."

"I hear, Calum, you are an old poacher, and know a good deal about the forests?"

"That's what they are saying, put whatever I was I'm all right now, and just as honest a man as Mr Paul has in his sarvice, though perhaps I say it as shouldn't say it. Put many's the fun I had when I was young among the deers."

"I'm sure you had?" I said, interrogatively.

"Man it used to be fine to go out and know that all the keepers was watching you, and just beat every one of them, and laugh at them when you met them on the road. It's a true word that says stolen waters is sweet. I mind one day—put it's no worth telling you."

"You go on," I said, "it will pass the time."

"I mind one day I was staying with a farmer out

the Tannich way, and says he to me one morning, 'Calum, there's company to be here the end of the week, may pe you could get them some good thing for their dinner.' 'May pe I could,' says I, 'I will try whatever.' So it's to get up next morning py the preak of day I did, and off I sets up the farm with a lad, Neil M'Lucas. But not a thing could I see; but after a while I made out with an old gless I hed three stags on the other side of the march. While I was looking, some of the shentry that hed the forest on that side came along, but they did not see the stags. So I waited till they went out of sight, and I thought out of hearing too, and put Neil to watch, and under the tempting of the devil I shust steppit across the march and shot one of the stags, and a fine peast he was. Thinks I, there'll soon be venison in the hoose and money in my pocket too. So I off with my coat and commenced to garalloch the stag, when one of the shentry, one Rossach More they called him, came upon me and got hold of me py the pack of the neck. 'I've caught you at last, you rascal,' says he. Well, I thought myself I was tone for; put I shust glinted my eye back and took a look at the shentleman, and thinks I, there's hope for poor Calum yet. So I made one big shump and was over the bank before you could count one, and across the purn like mad. When I got a bit off I sat toun on the hull to wipe my hed, for the sweat was shust pouring off like the rain. When the shentleman sees that

he says to the keeper was with him, 'he's just laughing at us,' says he; 'let us co after him and catch him.' 'Deed, sir,' says the keeper, 'there's no a man in ten counties could catch Calum when he's on the hull.' So the shentleman got nothing but my coat and my gun, which was creat loss to a poor man like me. Well, two or three years after, who did I meet one day at the kirk but the shentleman, and he knew me on the spot, and we had talk together. A fine man he wes. And he gave me back my gun; says I, you had petter give me my coat too. So he gave me a fine new coat, which was ferry pleasant in him, put, says I to him, you're a ferry clever man to be shurely, indeed; but you'd no have catched Calum if he hedn't trusted to that —— M'Lucas. He never whistled, you see, to give warning, but run away fast as his legs could carry him. He's a creat man now, but I wouldn't change skin with him though he's laird of Tostary."

"I think," said I, "that he lives near me. I know him."

"Well, then, you know as pad a man as is petween this and where he is, and that's saying a coot deal. He hed to run from this country for stealing sheep, and went to 'Stralia, where he made money, they're telling me no in a ferry good way; but who put him now talking of them as was pefore him?"

"Have you seen him since his return?"

"Seen him! it's me that hes. I went all the way

to Tostary shust for the sake of old days. I thought he would pe the petter of an honest man showing him encouragement, but who put him, and he wouldn't let on that he ever seen me! and was for putting me out on the toor without bit or sup, put yon lassie he hes with him was ferry kind, I must say that, and a bonny lassie she is too, and she gev me a goot dram and slippit a pound note in my hand to pay my passage in the steampoat; put he's no petter than he should pe called, put money covers a multitude of sins."

"He talks a good deal of his ancestors."

"Ou aye! them as was pefore me! Shust so; you ax him when he's on his high horse if he kens Calum Brochkair and minds the tay we wes after the teer, and also the shail at Dingwall. I'm thinking, though, you will need to be after whipping the poney; that's the steamer's smoke coming round the point."

We just managed to get to the shore as the ferry boat was leaving; and Calum, the foxes, and myself were soon on board the steamboat. She was very crowded both with passengers and goods; most of the quarter-deck cumbered with luggage and herring barrels, and the rest of her with sheep and cattle. I got breakfast in the cabin, and spent most of the day with the pleasant captain on the bridge admiring the glorious scenery. About midday I thought I would go down to the steerage and see how my friend Calum Brochkair was getting on. I found him in the very bow of the vessel, clutching the bowsprit,

and looking right into vacancy, with a pipe in his mouth. On the suggestion that a dram might not be amiss he awakened at once into practical life.

"Ay, the sun is just over the yard arm, as the sailors says, put no more. Put goot dram is goot company at all times, and they keep a drap of goot thing in this poat, I must say. It'll pe Isla I'm thinking? or perhaps Long Shon? who knows?"

"Well, Calum, we'll go down and see. There are some fine cattle on board here."

"Deed is they; but hev you seen the swine from the Stillery at Skye. Shust look here. Good sake, sich a peast! he's like an infidel!"

"I suppose you mean an elephant, Calum?"

"Och, maype; put isn't he splentid whatever. Shust you touch him with your stick, to make him show his other side. Goot meat there, sir, for the winter time!"

I was looking with Calum at the enormous pig, when I heard a deep groan behind me, and a voice say, in a solemn, guttural accent, preceded by a long-drawn sigh—

"Aye! I wish we wes all as prepared to die as he is!"

Turning round I came face to face with an extraordinary-looking character in an Inverness cape and old hat, beneath which—bound round his head—was a huge cotton pocket handkerchief, the ends of which were tied beneath his chin. His cheeks were sallow

and cadaverous; his eyes downcast. In his hand he carried a cotton umbrella, from which all particular colour had long ago departed. I thought I had seen him before, but for a moment, I couldn't say where. Then it flashed upon me that this was Mr Croker's "man," and yet he seemed changed. Where was the wig he wore? What had become of it? Had the bodach of Glenbogary borne the scalp away to the unseen as a trophy?

"I think, sir," I said, "you are the gentleman employed by Mr Croker of Drumle, near Stronbuy, where I am at present."

"I am the servant of the servants of the Lord, sir," said he, in a slow, whining voice.

I recollected that "Servus servorum Dei" was a favourite title of the Pope of Rome, but said nothing of this, for fear of giving offence, but I whispered to Calum that if the "man" wouldn't be offended, I would like to ask him to come down stairs with us.

"Shust you try him, sir. He hes ferry edifying conversation. It's two drams he and me hed the day already."

"And the sun," said I, "not over the yard arm!"

The sect of "the men" are well known to all who have lived for any time in the northern counties of Scotland. Some of them, perhaps most of them, are little more than decent lay preachers, who do their best quietly to influence their neighbours for good, both by precept and example. Others of them, how-

ever, are more pronounced both in manner and opinion. They are separatists, for they hold themselves aloof from any denomination, and seldom attend either Parish or Free Kirk. They affect a spurious sanctity, and are quite Pharisaical in their profession. Their dress is often peculiar, and they are much given to groaning and sighing, even when there seems but little to groan or sigh over. Their whole bearing, to the eye of a southerner at least, is grotesque in the extreme. It was to this class the "man" whom I now met belonged.

"Sandy," said Calum, addressing him familiarly, "the shentleman would like you to come doun stairs with us for a wee while."

"It's the Lord puts it into the hearts of some to be kind to His servants," groaned the man, as we went down to the cabin.

When the whisky was produced, Calum and I were about to partake, but the man rose and said first a long grace in Gaelic.

"I'm sure, Sandy," said Calum, "you said a blessing when you was toun pefore with me; couldn't that serve you for the whole day. Big Peter Lamont at Brex, when he kills a mart, says grace just once over the whole barrel of beef."

"Ah! Sandy," replied the man, "it's in times of great coldness and deadness we are living in. Big Peter is in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. That's what *he* is."

"I was sorry to hear, sir," said I, "that you had been molested in your work by the ghost of Glenbogary."

The man looked down to the table and groaned deeply more than once.

"Ay," he said at last, "Satan is indeed abroad upon the yearth. It's shudgments—it's shudgments that's coming upon the land. Oh, poor Scotland! Poor Scotland!"

"What was it you was toing, Sandy, to bring the bodach up from his place?" said Calum.

"Ah! it's the searchings of heart that I hev upon that. First I thought it was a shudgment pecause of the wickedness of the district. Oh the terrible wickedness of that ball at Frackersaig, and of that escopian shurch at Tobar Claisaich."

"Surely there was nothing in the episcopalian church to draw down anger from above," I said.

"Oh, sir, do not say that; it's an organ they hev there, and hymns. I saw the ledies and shentlemans coming out one tay and they was laughing and talking. Do you think there's chreestians amang them, sir?"

"Most certainly I do."

"Well, they say so, put (doubtfully) I do not know. I was speaking to Doctor M'Phail, and he made clear to me many things. Ay, it's him that has the unction, indeed. I said I was afraid it was the eniquity of the country that was bringing the evil speerits above the ground."

"Guid sake," said Calum, "what did the doctor say?"

"He said that there was indeed great sins in the land. There was Voluntareism, which is the spawn of hell, and national infedelity, and the fungus of Desestablishment, and the Word degraded in the Free Church, and organs and hymns."

"Ay, he's a fine man, the doctor," said Calum, admiringly.

"Put it wes none of these enequities he thoght proght up the eevil speerit in Glenbogary; he thought it wes a shudgment upon myself—poor frail man that I am."

"How?" said I. "What had you been doing?"

"I had been wearing a wig, sir," groaned the man; "it never came into my mind that it was sinful. My head was cold, and I put it on for the heat of it. Oh dear, the fallen nature that's in us!"

"What could be wrong in wearing a wig?"

"Ah! sir, was it not a falsehood I was wearing upon my head, and was it not to take the wig the speerit did, and cast it to the ground. Oh, the frailty of man! The frailty of *poor* man. So I put the wig away as an unclean thing, and I sold it to Hector Beaton the tinsmith."

"But won't it be a sin in him to wear it?" I asked.

"Oh sir! Hector cannot pe worse nor he is. He's a Mooderate."

"You mean a member of the Established Church?"

"Ay, and the synagogue of Satan."

"Really you are very severe upon the churches," I said. "You have nothing good to say of any one of them."

"Deed no, sir; alas, alas, I hev not; they are all departed from the truth. Oh poor Scotland—poor Scotland! that I should live to see the day. Put His flock is a small flock. It's a good speerit this you are giving unto me. Did not the children of Israel tairy py the waters of Elim and the palm trees in the tesert?"

"Am thinking it's from the Kildalton distillery," said Calum; "or maybe it's Carbost—'deed I would not wonder."

After such approbation I felt bound to order another dram, which the two worthies settled down to with great gusto. I, however, couldn't help asking the "man" whether his employer, Mr Croker of Drumle, would approve altogether of his present refreshment.

"Oh, sir, the labourer is worthy of his hire. Mr Croker is a fine man indeed, and when I was seeing him at Drumle he made me take the pledge, which I did to please him indeed. Ah! the fear of man bringeth a snare! Put though I took the pledge in Drumle I did not take it in the *Clansman*, nor no other place."

"Hooch, Sandy," said Calum, "pledges is well indeed, but there's ways of getting out of them too. If a man compels you to swallow a tram, it's no fault of

your own if you take it, and you can get a pain in the stomach, and then it's good medicine, and there is another way, to mix it among the ginger wine! There's John M'Callum, the teetotaller, who keeps the shop at Brex, has fine cordials, will warm the heart same as a tram."

"Ay," groaned the man, "I do not like the preaching apout temperance, it's shust mere morality—mere cold morality, cleansing the outside of the cup and of the platter—it's no the Gospel at all."

"Deed you're right there," said Calum, "and more nor that, how can the highlander stand the cold and the rain on the hull without something to keep him hot in the inside."

"Ay," moaned the wigless toper, "it's false doctrine that's abroad, Calum, false doctrine, and unsound views of all kinds; put Tophet is open! Tophet is open! and the fire is coming, yea, it is prepared."

"Well," I ventured to say, "physicians are coming now to say that the less stimulant we take the better, and when we are fatigued, a cup of coffee is a safe and wholesome beverage."

"Coffee! coffee!" said Calum, with contempt, "none of their coffee's for me."

"Ah, sir, it's shust science falsely so called," said the man, with a sigh. "Well did the godly M'Lachlan tell of the delusions that was to come upon people after his time."

The steward now came into the cabin to tell us we

were nearing Tomindoun, so I had to break up our conviviality. Before I left the cabin, I said to the "man," that I would be glad to see him at Stronbuy any time he should be passing.

"Ay," said he, "I am coming, sir, if I am spared, to see the factor. He does not, I am told, go to any church, and will, perhaps, be glad to let me tarry with him, put I hope you will not deal with me after the manner of that Son of Belial at Tostary."

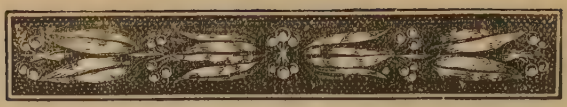
"You mean Mr M'Lucas."

"Ay! ay! when I escaped from the speerit, I sought refuge at Tostary, leaving my covering in the hand of the enemy, put the son of Belial would not receive me, neither would he suffer me to tarry with him, put thrust me out again into the darkness. I shook the dust off my feet for a witness against him. I took refuge at Boyle, the fisher's, where was Miss M'Lucas. I think she is a child of grace. She was ferry kind to me indeed."

"Ay, put he's a bad ane him," said Calum. "When you see him, mind to tell him apout me."

I took a hearty farewell of Calum.

"Good bye, sir," said he, as I stepped on to the gangway, "but we'll meet again, as the minister of Inverary said. He met, you know, a parcel of plaguards once on the 'Columba' steampoat at the Glasgow fair time, and when he was leaving them at Ardrishaig, that was what he said, 'We'll meet again, gentlemen,' said he. 'How that?' says they. 'I'm a jail chaplain!' says he."



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE PRESBYTERY.

THE Hon. Mr Ted met me on the Tomindoun Pier. He had come over in the factor's trap from Stronbuy, and had brought Bob along with him. On going towards the village I met that worthy, to my astonishment, dressed in the costume in which he had figured at the Frackersaig ball. Had I not seen him there, I certainly should never have known him. He seemed exactly, with his flowing robe and tonsured head, the counterpart of one of the friars that are to be met with in a French or Italian town. He was followed by a crowd of boys and girls whose expressed wonder he regarded with great imperturbability. When he met me, he stretched out his three fingers, and coolly gave me his blessing.

"Keep dark, old boy," he said, in his broken French, "this is a fine lark. I've been all round the town, and no one knows me from Moses."

"Do as you like," I replied, in the same language; "but I will have nothing to do with your trick. It is really too much of a good thing, and if you are discovered, the consequences may be very unpleasant for all of us."

"All right, Monsieur Solomon Sobersides. I think I perceive the 'man' carrying up his carpet-bag from the boat. I shall proceed to interview him. Pax vobiscum," he said to Ted and myself, and went down the quay to meet the "man."

"I suspect, Ted," I said, "this affair will bring us into disgrace. How on earth did you let the fellow come with you?"

"He would come," Ted replied. "I give out that he is a friend of Mr Chislom, the priest, who has come from France to visit him. Not one of the shopkeepers recognised him. His make-up is so good that I have every hope we shall get him away without his being found out. I wish we could have left at once. One of the springs of the trap broke between Drissaig and this place, so we shall have to wait till it is sorted."

At the door of the Tomindoun Inn I met Dr M'Audle, who informed me that this was the day on which the Presbytery met. All the members of the court were present, and if I would go with him up stairs, he would be glad to introduce me to the brethren. Before I did so, I deputed Ted to remain and keep an eye on Bob, in case of accidents.

The Church of Scotland, as the reader probably knows, is Presbyterian in its government. A Presbytery consists of the ministers who are the incumbents of the parishes of a certain district, and with them are associated a number of laymen who sit with them as "elders."

Tomindoun was the seat of the Presbytery of Tobersnorey. The court only met three or four times in the year for the transaction of business, and the present meeting was the principal one of the season. At it the members made up returns on various matters to the General Assembly or Supreme Court of the Church, and examined candidates for the ministry in their Theological studies. They also dined together afterwards.

Accompanying Dr M'Audle up stairs, I found the reverend body convened in the large public room of the inn. There was not much ecclesiastical pomp and circumstance about the gathering. At the head of the large mahogany table sat the Rev. Mr M'Rory, minister of the parish of Tobersnorey, from which the Presbytery took its title. He acted as president or "Moderator" of the court. The other ministers and one or two laymen occupied seats round the table, in the centre of which was a tray with bottles and glasses and bread and cheese, from which, when I entered, the brethren were refreshing themselves. On the old-fashioned sideboard were heaped up their hats and outer garments in a huge pile; while at a table apart were three Theological students, gaunt, raw-boned, shock-headed lads, poring over some examination papers which had been set them.

I was introduced to the members of presbytery by Mr M'Rory, an old acquaintance of mine, who gave me a cordial welcome.

"Teed, Mr Gunter, we are all here to-tay. This is Mr M'Stottie, my elder, from Clachgugary; and this is Mr Spelder, minister of Glentyre; and this is Hunter, the minister of Camus; and this Mr M'Lachlan, the minister of Achronich; and this Mr Ross, from the Sound; and there's two young men here too," said he with a sneer; "they will soon tell you apout themselves, for they are not ferry packward in the coming forward. But shentlemen, we will proceed to pusiness."

While the reverend gentlemen were settling themselves to their work, I took a survey of 'the court.' Its composition was not a little striking, and thoroughly Celtic. Mr Ross was a huge, ungainly man, whose rusty black clothes seemed in a strained condition, and in danger of being rent asunder by every movement he made in his chair. He had a broad unintellectual countenance, and altogether appeared as if he had come fresh from following the plough. Hunter was a man of a different build: a little dapper dark-haired man, with black whiskers, which, when they came between you and the light, told by their hue of the use of the dye-pot. Spelder was sharp and irascible looking, and his very features told of a gun-powdery temper, with which it would be perilous to trifle. Mr M'Lachlan was a slender, gentlemanly-looking man, the most cultured in appearance of the party. His manners were quiet and unobtrusive, and the huge roll of white linen round his neck bespoke

the clergyman of the old school. At the end of the table furthest from the moderator were the two young men to whom he had made special reference. They were of an entirely different type from the others. In England they certainly would have been taken for two curates of rather high church proclivities. They wore collarless coats, high waistcoats, and the usual band of white linen about the throat. One of them was fair-haired and of slight figure; the other burly and self-assertive, with long locks that had evidently not made acquaintance with the barber for a considerable time. They both seemed earnest lads, and I was rather anxious to know more about them. I may here say that at the close of the meeting, my wish for fuller information was gratified by Mr M'Rory.

"Deed, Mr Gunter, they are two young men of the new school that have lately come among us, and their ways are ferry different from ours. We call them Professor Chennery's chickens. It's a professor of that name in Glasgow that trains them up. They're always veesiting and preaching and praying in their parishes, and they come to the presbytery and make motions and speeches, and try and stir us up as if we were just a set of dry bones. I will say this, however, that after a time their kind generally adapt themselves to the climate, which is too damp for zeal like theirs. Highland nature, sir, is just like a piece of the bog; you may get a fine crop out of it for a

year or two, but it soon goes back to the heather again."

The proceedings of the presbytery were of no great public interest, though occasionally they were lively enough. Spelder would at times flare up like a gunpowder squib, and strike his clenched fist in wrath upon the table; the two chickens would make speeches, to the great disgust of their elders, and Mr Ross from the Sound scowled defiance at them. It took all the tact of the chairman to get the business conducted with tolerable calmness.

"Here," said the moderator, "is a schedule that has come down from Edinburgh to be filled up for the next Assembly, regarding the life and work of our parishes. What are we to do with it?"

"We have too much interference from Edinburgh," said Spelder, thumping the table.

"Petter they would look after themselves," grunted Mr Ross.

"Well," said Mr M'Rory, "what are we to do with it, brethren?"

"Put it into the fire," said Mr M'Lachlan.

Here one of the "chickens" rose and made a little speech. The matter referred to was very important, and it behoved every true son of the church to see that it was attended to. He thought Mr Spelder might have retained a little of the superabundant fervour he had shown against this innocent schedule to spend on the life and work of his own parish, where,

by all accounts, it was very much needed. (Hear, hear from the other 'chicken.')

At this point in the young gentleman's remarks, Spelder rose to his feet furiously and demanded an apology, and shaking his fist at the "chicken," called him "shust a puppy, with his airs and meeners, speaking of those that was ministers before he was porn." A scene of confusion now arose, all the members of the Presbytery gesticulating and speaking at once. It was sometime until, by the interposition of Doctor M'Audle, the dispute was settled amicably. The meeting then took up one piece of routine business after another, though with continual interruptions of a pugnacious kind. The theological students gave in their papers, and were dismissed. And the conclave was closed by Mr M'Lachlan, who acted as clerk, proclaiming at the door the time and place of next meeting; and by the moderator pronouncing the benediction.

Before the brethren, however, separated, the latter dignitary reminded them that they were all expected to dine together in that room at four o'clock. Perhaps a little conviviality, he suggested, might smooth the disagreeings, he was sorry to say, they had had that day.

"A contented mind, Mr M'Rory," said Mr Ross, with some unction, "as the Word tells us, is a conteenual feast."

"Yes," Mr Ross, "that may pe ferry true; put a

feast is also the pest way to get a contented mind! Put pefore you go, brethren, there is a little matter I wish to pring pefore you. I pelieve you will have observed that there is a strange clergyman, from a foreign land, in the toun this tay. They tell me that he is ferry high in position in his own church, which is the Church of Rome. I hear he is nearly a bishop. Now, I think we should show some kindness and hospitality to him. He is not a brother, indeed, put he is a kind of cousin, and I would like him to carry away a good opeenion of the clergy of Scotland to France or Italy, or wherever he comes from. Now, I propose to ask the shentleman to his dinner. He will not find our good broth heretical, whatever."

"I will not agree to it, I know what Papists are. I was a missionary onst amang them in Glascho," cried Spelder, in wrath. "It would pe enough to pring our martyred ancestors from their graves to hev this man here."

"Och, no fear of that," said Mr M'Rory, coaxingly, to his irascible brother; "and I'm sure it may perhaps pe of great speeritual penefit for him to meet with a kind man like you that's well known over the church to be thoroughly versed in the Roman controversy. 'Deed, they say you are to be made a D.D. for it."

This judicious flattery appeared to smooth down Mr Spelder, and he did not persist in his objection. Mr M'Rory was permitted to ask the foreign

cleric to dinner, and myself and friend were invited also.

On going out into the street, I could see nothing of either Mr Ted or the pseudo friar, though I looked into all the shops along the quay. But as I was taking a walk in the outskirts of the village, and passing a low-looking pot-house, I thought I heard the voice of the "man" droning out something between a psalm and a song. On peeping in at an open window I discovered him and the friar sitting amicably together, with a gill stoup and glasses on a wooden table between them, while Ted, with a grave face, sat by the fire.

"Tat is de beautiful music," said the friar in broken English. "In de my countree, no song like dat. "Will you gev de other chanson?"

"Is any pody merry, let him sing psaums," hiccuped the man, and groaned forth some guttural sounds, which were I suppose intended to be rhythmical.

"Capeetal. First rete, ver goot, cried the friar!" you vil make vat you call de precentor in de church catho-lique. "De Pope he tell me, bring him von from Scotlan'. Vil you come?"

"Got forbit," said the man. "The Pope is Antichrist. He is the man of sin. He is the scarlet woman." He is—

"Ver fine gentlehomme, ver fine gentleman, sar. I know him vel."

"Aye! aye, and ye know him?" said the man, with

considerable curiosity, which at times got the better of his unction.

"Ver well," said Bob.

"He will be clothed in scarlet, and faring sumptuously every day, I'm sure. Ay, it's the cup of red wine he'll pe after trinking soon, of another kind. Tophet is open, yea the fire is prepared."

"He is ver fine gentlehomme, de Pope. He hev de goot breakfast and dejeuner, and dinné. He vas fond of de Scotch viskee, de Pope."

"Ay! ay! is it whiskey you tell me he'll be after trinking; it'll be the goot stuff he will be getting, may pe Clynleish? deed I would not wonder! put sir, I tell you sir, solemnly, his tay is trawing to a close. Babylon! Babylon! will pe falling soon, yea she will pe purnt up, and consumed with the fire. Woe unto her! woe unto her! Will it pe from this country he will pe getting the whiskey, or may pe he will have a still of his own? I have a cousin, he's a speerit seller in Greenock, could give him ferry good thing at sixteen shilling the gallon!"

"Ver goot, I vil tell to Hes Holiness of you, sar; he vil send to you de benediction Papale."

"How much will that pe in our money," inquired the man! "But, oh,—woe! woe! unto him that exalteth himself, and sitteth in the temple. Is his hand not red with the plood of the martyrs! I would not wonder now put it's off the silver and the gold he will pe eating, even the gold of Ophir!"

"It is off de plat of de diamond and de saphir!"

"Ay! ay! do come out of her sir, come out of her sir, pe not partaker of her sins. Tophet is open! I will give you my cousin's address in Greenock. It's refreshing speerit he hes, and not pig in the price. Oh, come out of her, come out of her. It is a pity to think a decent man with kind heart like yourself, should pe doomed to destruction."

"You Sar, vil make de converte of me, I am afraid. Vil you take another vat you call drame?"

"Deed, sir, I hev hed perhaps plenty for one tay, and I must pe going to Drissaig, put the way is long and the hill is steep. I maype take another leettle drop. Oh! it's in the wilderness we are just now, sir, and earthly comforts are needed to help us on to the pank of the Jordan. And do you tell me you know the Pope? What kind of looking man will he pe now?"

"De Pope," said the friar, ringing the bell for another dram, "is de ver peautiful gentlehomme. He is vat you call beeg, grand, magnifique, tree-menduous, superbe!"

"Oh me, the day! And it's doubtless a fine house he will pe after dwelling in; not like our meenisters in this country. They are telling me it's to keess his toe they will pe doing in Rome, poth leedies and shentle-mans. Och, och, the ineequity that is in the world! He shall pe cut off soon. What will his toe do for him then, pore meeserable senner that he is? His days is numbered. His destruction is at hand."

"De Pope hev ver agreeable life. He have de splendid vat you call pal— ver kings leeve. Everybody keess de toe of de Pope with plaiser, sar. You vil keess him yourself."

"Oh me, the day! Anathema Maranatha! and it's goot pay he will pe geevin to his meenisters? Mr Croker sheust geeves me wan pound in the week; it is too little, and me holding meetings all the week, fighting with sons of belial by day, and speerits by night. Och, och! it's a pore world this, after all. A dry wilderness, and put leetle water to pe found."

"Vil you come into de eglise, de Church Catholique, sar? Ver goot pay de Pope giv you, sar? Vil you come into de ark of de eglise?"

What the "man" might have said in reply to this direct attempt at his perversion, it is impossible to tell. A tall, slight-looking gentleman in grey clothes passed the window, into which he glanced rapidly, and the "man" was at once recalled to a state of slightly inebriated gravity.

"Och, pe quiet, sir, that is Mr Croker of Drumle himself; it's not leestening to your wicked talk I should pe. I must not pe idling here with you in the market-place. I must gird up my loins and go into the vineyard. Let me warn you of your creat wickedness. You are in the pay of Satan; you are a child of darkness. I will not tarry with you any longer. I will not eat nor drink with you. I will co

from your presence; yea, I will gather up the skeerts of my garments from you, lest they be defiled."

Suiting his action to his words, the "man" rose from his seat, put on his old hat, and scowled from under it upon his two former companions. As he made his way majestically out at the door something seemed to strike him, and he looked back and said in low and entirely different tones:

"I forgot to say, sir, that my cousin's address in Greenock is number twanty-four on the Beeg Quay. Hector Morrison is his name. He keeps good stuff. Poth Clynleish and Isla. The Pope will pe well pleased with it, I assure you."

He passed me by outside, where I was sitting upon the stump of a tree opposite the window of the house, without notice, and took the Drissaig road, it must be confessed, with somewhat wavering and uncertain steps. His two companions came out immediately after him laughing heartily together. I again begged Bob to give over his ridiculous performance, at the same time telling him of the Presbytery dinner. I offered, if he would desist and take the Drissaig road, that I would follow him with one of the inn conveyances, and pick him up. He was in no mood, however, for such advice. He would certainly dine with the brethren. It would not be respectful to refuse. So he stalked away majestically into the village, with the strings of his girdle flying behind him, leaving Ted and myself to follow.

"You know, Ted, this may end badly," I said, "and if M'Lucas hears of Bob's conduct, it will entirely do away with all hope of reconciliation. Miss M'Lucas herself will think seriously before she has anything to say to a buffoon like that."

"Miss M'Lucas much prefers the honourable son of a noble lord to the buffoon, or you either," said Ted, "but I mean to stand by the buffoon, as you call him, and see him through this business, and so must you. So come along."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### A CLERICAL SYMPOSIUM.

WE found the reverend brethren of the Presbytery packed together in a little room up stairs waiting for the call to dinner, but on a side table was set a small case bottle with bitters, of which every one was asked to partake on entering as a whet to the appetite. Several laymen from the town were there, Sandy White, the provost, and Dr Halley, and Duncan M'Luskey, the banker, John M'Sporan, the fiscal, in a white waistcoat, and some others. The number present was far too large for the little room, which was hot and stifling. While we were standing and conversing with one another, the portly figure of the friar entered with dignified step.

"Pax vobiscum," said he.

"Et cum spiritu tuo," responded Mr M'Rory, the moderator, advancing briskly and grasping the extended hand, "Teed, sir, and we are glad to see you. You must not think that we Protestants hev no powels of compassion; it is part of our religion to pe kind to them as needs kindness, and to take in the stranger; and allow me to introduce you to the Presbytery, and especially to Mr Spelder, who is ferry well acquainted with the doctrines of your church,

having lived in the Gallowgate of Glasgow for a conseederable time among the Papists, I mean among the Catholics."

Mr Spelder made a bow, "Teed, Moderator, I was for many years in that same Gallowgate, till I got a kirk at the Disruption, contending with the disciples of him that seeteth upon the seven hills, put is it not written, 'if thine enemy thirst give him drink?' Will you not try our pitters, sir? (to the friar), it's a coot thing a sharpening stone for the scythe pefore the mowing pegins."

The friar helped himself to a thimbleful with a twinkling eye, and I was afraid would betray himself, but he lifted his glass gravely, and bowed to the assembled company with a graceful air, as became a dignified ecclesiastic.

"You'll maype know Michael Costello in the Gallowgate," said Spelder, "he pelongs to your pody. Many's the pattle him and me hed upon purgatory and the Confession, the Council of Trant, and matters of that kind, and there's no a man in Glasgow will keep a petter dram nor him."

"I do not know Monsieur Michael—moi church is ver big church—vat you call extenseeve—many creetians in moi church. It is de ark of safety."

At this one of the "chickens" evidently donned his war paint, and advanced to the attack, but Mr Spelder motioned him back with a wave of the hand, and was beginning to furbish up the rusty controversial wea-

pons which had done duty in the Gallowgate, and had already put a question "on the Council of Trant," when a waiter, coming to the door of the room, announced that "tinner was on the taple, shentlemen." Dinner was set in the room where the Presbytery had been deliberating. Mr M'Rory took the head of the table, as Moderator, and the clerk sat at the other end. The former was beginning to say grace, when the friar mumbled "benedictus benedicat," and sat down. This did not, however, satisfy the head of the Presbytery, who gave a blessing of portentous length. The fare was plain and substantial, and the dinner went on without incident worth noticing, every one present being intent on the viands before him. Before the repast concluded, Mr Spelder eyed wistfully a small plate of jelly in the centre of the table, and transferred the whole quietly on to his plate.

"That is desert, Mr Spelder," said one of the chickens who had noticed the proceeding from the end of the table.

"I do not care," said the indignant Spelder, going on with his attack upon the jelly, "even if it were a wilderness."

When the cloth was removed, Mr M'Rory rose and gave in succession the toasts of "the Queen and Royal Family," and "The Kirk, God bless her," which were duly honoured in sherry and port. He then suggested that the wine of the country might be brought in.

"It is very cold wark for the stamach trinking this wine, shentlemen, and I am sure prethren you will all agree with me that we should have in the hot water and the aaparatus."

The toddy tumblers were produced and replenished, conversation became very general, and a good deal of humour, more or less of a personal and local character prevailed.

"I'm told, Mr M'Sporran, that yon meeserable laird of yours is married again to the fourth wife," said Mr Ross.

"Och, yes," said M'Sporran, "what for no! there was a man on the street to-day asking me if he took a bridal tour. I don't know, says I. He took a whip to the last one. Whether he is going to take a bridle to this one, I cannot say!"

"Is it true, Mr M'Sporan," said Ross, "that Mr M'Rory there, took for his text the first day they were in the church, 'There will be peace so long as the moon endureth?'"

"What is this I was hearing," said Mr M'Rory, addressing the stouter of the chickens, "apout a creat revival movement in your parish?"

"I was not aware," said the chicken meekly.

"Well, I am told that there is a great awakening takes place at the close of each of your sermons, whatever."

This somewhat far-fetched and not very modern joke was loudly applauded by the more venerable

members of Presbytery, who seemed to enjoy any hit at the chickens. One of those much sat upon individuals, however, was not slow to retort.

"How is your own parish getting on, Mr M'Rory? Is the church at Tobar clarsaich in its usual flourishing condition?"

Now the church at Tobar clarsaich was an Episcopalian chapel, built by the late Mr M'Cracken, landowner in Mr M'Rory's parish, and was supposed to be a sore subject with that divine, who, however, answered affably enough:

"Teed we hev peen heving a stirring time with the escopian meenisters. First we hed a light kind of lad shust like yourself, with a long coat like you hev on, who was ferry good at laun tennis, and the like of that; then we hed the Pishop himself for a while, a ferry fine man indeed. I met him at dinner at young M'Cracken's. I asked him to preach for me a tay in the English, put he would not."

"What did he say to your request?" said Dr M'Audle.

"Teed, he said he was ferry sorry he could not preach for me as my kirk was not consecrated, and he would need to hev on his fiddle-faddle. Teed, said I, tid not your Master preach out of a herring smack upon the lake of Galilee? I never heard that smacks was consecrated, and what clothes had he on? Maype little enough, says I. After he left, we got a very clever man to the chapel. A kind of a prophet, like

—he gives lectures upon Daniel two days in the week."

"That will rouse you up," said the stout chicken, ironically.

"Well, he hes all the leedies, young and old, flocking to him. He is a ferry clever man, for while he lectures to them, he gets them to mend his shirts, and put puttons on them. He had a ferry fine lecture last week upon the 'iron horn.' My wife was there, put I tid not co myself."

"Ay, Mr M'Rory," interjected Mr M'Sporran the elder, "it's another kind of horn you will pe liking."

"Maype you're no far wrong there," said Mr M'Lachlan.

"I'm thinking," said M'Lusky the banker, "them Escopians is just like the sheep Mr Croker brought to Drumle from the south of England. They look ferry pretty, but they are too fine in the wool for this country, and they died in the winter time."

"If I was to change," said young M'Sporran the fiscal, who affected the airs of a man of the world, "I would go to our friend here," pointing to the friar. "But as Captain M'Dougall of the *Pioneer* said to the two tourists, 'We are no going that way just yet.' You'll have heard that good one of the Captain, Doctor M'Audle?"

"I can't say I have," replied the doctor.

"Oh, the Captain was waiting at the quay at Oban, and couldn't leave for the fog. 'Why don't you go

on?' said one of the tourists. 'Don't you see the fog?' said the Captain. 'Yes,' said the other; 'put it is clear overhead.' 'Maype,' said the Captain; 'put we are no going that way—at least not at the present time.' He's a ferry jokey man the Captain."

"I am told, Mr Hunter," said Mr M'Sporran, "you had Dr M'Tavish from Perth preaching for you. They tell me he's a wonderful powerful man."

"Ay; he was staying at the inn, and he gev us a discoorse I never heard the like. He had a shipwreck, a railway collision, an explosion, a fire, and a battle in it, not to speak of the electric telegraph and the steam engine, and he ended off with a suicide, which he acted by drawing his hand across his throat. It's had a terrible effect. There's been three children born in the parish since, and they all have a mark blood-red right across the thrapple."

"Most terrible indeed," said Mr M'Rory. "Hev you any news down your way, Mr M'Lachlan?"

"You would hear, I daresay," said Mr M'Lachlan, "what happened to our brother from the Sound when he was preaching at Kilmore."

"No, teed I tid not."

"Well, you know, he is ferry fond of preaching extampore, and when he went into the vestry he said to the elders, 'I really do not know what to preach apout,' says he. 'Do you not know,' says Tuncan M'Tavish, one of the elders, 'what to preach apout?'

'No, I do not really.' 'Well, then,' says Tuncan, 'shust preach apout five minutes, it will pe quite enough.'" (Laughter.)

"It's out of his own head," said Ross, "he got that one, Mr M'Rory; put here is one that is quite true apout himself. When he was preaching at Slashach one tay, he was ferry eloquent inteed, and when he was in his raptures he cried, 'And what shall I say more, my freends—what shall I say more? What shall I say more?' 'Say amen,' says a dacent woman that was sitting pelow the pulpit.'"

"Ay," said M'Rory, "she was a ferry sensible woman that; put is it true what I was hearing apout you, Mr Ross, and Cracket Thompson?"

"Just lies," said Ross, scornfully; "just lies."

"What was it?" said young M'Sporran the fiscal. "I didn't hear it."

"Oh, you know, Cracket Thompson is a kind of sticket minister goes apout the country. He found the lodgings so good at the Sound that he tarried with our friend a long time, and our prother did not like to turn the poor man away either; put one morning he prayed at the worship for 'our veesiting brother who is this tay to depart from us.' Cracket Thompson took the road ferry soon."

"Shust lies," said Ross.

"Are you celibate in your church? Have your meenistare wife?" said the friar, who had been listening with a stolid countenance.

"Hoot ay," said Duncan M'Lusky the banker, roaring out his words as if he made himself more intelligible to the foreigner thereby; "oor clargy is like Chirsty Gilchrist's fleas. You know that story, Moderator?"

"I cannot say that I do," replied the chairman.

"Chirsty kept a small inn in the end of Fortwilliam," said M'Lusky, "and one night an Englishman slept there, and was nearly devoured with the fleas, and he complained terrible to Chirsty in the morning. 'There's no a *single* one in this house,' said she in a rage. ''Deed I pelieve you,' says he; 'they are all married and have large families.' That's true of all our clargy, sir."

"They're telling me that's a grand sermon you hev on the prodigal," said Doctor M'Audle to the stout chicken. "You must come some day and give us it at Drissaig."

"I shall be most happy to do so, Doctor."

"Ay," said M'Rory, "I'm told he is ferry grand upon the prodigal whatever; he says he wouldn't wonder though the father kept that calf for *years* waiting his return."

"It's not the case! It's not the case, sir," indignantly roared the chicken.

"No offence, sir, meant; no offence meant," said M'Rory; "put you young men are always saying clever and original things like that, things that nopody else says."

"Ay," added Spelder with a scowl, "and things nopody ought to say!"

The conversation now began to be distinctly personal and unpleasant, but the Moderator recalled all to good humour again.

"Shentlemen," said Mr M'Rory, rapping the table with his toddy-ladle, "fill your glasses for a toast. I am sure you will agree with me when I say that the Church of Scotland may hev creat faults, and hes (hear, hear); put there is one fault she hes not, she is not given to inhospiteelity. (Great applause.) We hev here to-tay an illustrious stranger who hes made himself ferry agreeable indeed (hear, hear, from Spelder, to whom the friar had been very affable), and though we are perhaps sorry he pelongs to another communion, we must not let that shill the warmth of our highland welcome. If we could induce him to stay longer amongst us, and parteecularly to veesit our brother Mr Spelder, who has studied the Decrees of the Council of Trent in the Gallowgate of Glasgow, we might yet hev the creat happiness of seeing him not merely at our table put in our pulpits, like Shon Knox of old. Meantime he is in another field, put who knows when the hedge is taken town whether we will not pe found to be working on the same crop, and pringing in the same harvest. (Cries of 'No' from the chickens.) I peg to propose the health of our illustrious guest."

The toast was drunk with enthusiasm, and the

friar, who had hitherto been very silent, rose with great solemnity and said, "Benedicite, you hev peen very goot to me—now the Pope he hear tell of your goodness, and of de goodness of your viskey—(hear, hear!)—he vil come over himself. But der is, messeurs, no eglise seulment de eglise catholique apostolique infallible. Mon ceur is 'cassé,' vat you call broken for you. You are all hereticale and excommunicato; in my church is de ark of safety; youre Jean Nokes is one filius de diabilo—un grand heritique—he is in inferno."

This abuse of the Scottish reformer, and allusion to his present position was not to be tolerated, especially by men well warmed up by whiskey toddy, and a storm arose from every part of the table which drowned the utterances of the friar, who was assailed with cries of "retract, retract," "shame," "sich impudence," &c.

"Messieurs, I will not say *pardon*," shouted the friar, "you are inimicos sanctae ecclesiae."

"But the Council of Trent," shouted Spelder—

"Think of our Life and Work," cried the fair-haired chicken.

"Will you really say we are not Christians?" said M'Lachlan.

It was a considerable time before the excitement caused by the denunciations of their guest subsided, and there were mutterings from the irate gentlemen while the symposium lasted. A chord had been

struck which was not likely to cease vibrating for some time. I whispered to Doctor M'Audle, who had done his best to throw oil on the troubled waters, that we would slip away, which we did without much effusion on the part of our hosts. While the factor was yoking the pony in the back yard I saw Mr M'Lean, Maolachy, and Trant enter the inn by the front door, and knew that the trick would be discovered if they should meet any of the Presbytery, for they had seen the friar at the Frackersaig ball. I was right in my conjecture. We just emerged from the stableyard on to the street when I saw the comical face of Mr M'Rory protruding from the window of the room in which we had been dining, and knew that the discovery I feared had been made.

"We are in for it now," I whispered to Ted. "Make the factor whip up the pony."

We had but got a few yards down the street when there was a loud shout after us. On looking back we saw the members of the presbytery with their guests come pouring pell-mell out of the inn. First came Mr Spelder calling on us to stop. He was evidently in a towering passion. He shouted for the police, and shook his fist at us violently. Behind him appeared the clerical wideawake of one of the chickens, and in the rear the amused faces of Mr M'Lean, Maolachy, and Mr M'Sporran. There seemed an inclination on the part of some of the party to pursue us. If they had any such intention there was no probability of

the fleetest of them overtaking us. Ted lifted his hat politely by way of farewell, and Bob kissed his hand and bowed gracefully as we turned the corner of the long street, and trotted briskly up the Drissaig road.

"The reverend gentlemen," said Ted, when we got well out of sight, "will have something to record in the annals of their presbytery. I don't believe even your own minister, M'Rory, Bob, made you out. But I'm afraid your chance of the eldership is but small now."

"I must say I felt rather to take in poor M'Rory; he is such a good soul. Didn't he propose my health beautifully! But as for the chickens and old Spelder, it was rather good fun. If you keep out M'Rory and M'Audle, the rest are a poor lot."

"Perhaps you won't find it such good fun," I remarked, "when you are lodged in the Tomindoun jail, and fed for a week or two on prison fare. It will cool down your zeal for practical joking."

"Nonsense, my dear boy, they'll forget all about it in a week. The wrath of a Highlandman is like one of his own burns, it rises very quickly, and rages and foams for a short time, but soon runs dry. I have no doubt they are having a good laugh at the business over their third tumbler."

"What in earth tempted you to play such a trick?"

"What tempted Eve to take the apple, my admirable theologian?"

"By the way," said Ted; "I heard some news in Tomindoun."

"Well!"

"Sir Donald M'Intosh, the member for the county, is dead. He has been long ill, and has died at Baden. So there'll be the excitement of an election soon. And I heard also that M'Lucas and Publius Park had a dreadful row, and that Park has gone south."

"I could have told you that," said I. "He left the morning I went to Brex."

"I hope old M'Lucas gave him some of the Billingsgate he gave me the night I carried his niece up to the castle when she sprained her foot. He poured out fearful language at me. He has a number of most original oaths, I must say. He must have added greatly to his Highland stock at Ballarat. As Sarah, my housekeeper, says of her minister, Mr Shaw, he has a voluminous vocabulairy."

"I fear, Bob," said I, "your chances at Tostary are about up, and when this Presbytery affair gets wind, you may say goodbye to all hope in that quarter."

"I suppose so," said he, with wonderful cheerfulness. "Did Paul say anything to you about the Australian Mutton and Beef Company?"

"He seemed to think Trant should be in London looking after its affairs."

"Oh, Trant is looking after something else," said Ted. "I suspect he is at Maolachy constantly. There is a pic-nic, or lawn tennis, or a shooting

party, or something going on every day at all the houses round. He is really a fine fellow, Trant."

"Isn't Miss M'Lean engaged to a cousin of her own?"

"So they say; and I told Trant so when I met him at Tostary after you went away, in case he should make a fool of himself; but he didn't seem to believe it, and what's more, though Miss M'Lean is always chaffing him about his mutton company and so on, I really do think she likes him."

"I suppose while I was away you were over at Reudle."

"Nothing of the sort. Old M'Lucas insisted upon my remaining at Tostary, and I got no further; and I only came to Stronbuy last night to make sure about the factor meeting you. I picked up Bob there. I had a capital time at Tostary, all kinds of fun going on."

"Is Trant there yet?"

"Oh no! he is living at the inn at Drissaig. It's a central place, and he has a pony hired, and goes riding about all over the country. He has entirely forgotten all about going to town to look after the mutton company."

"I hope things won't go wrong there?"

"I hope not, too. Old M'Lucas is in it. And so is Paul, but Park is the biggest shareholder. Trant tried old Maolachy, but it was no go. He's a downy bird, old M'Lean."

"And how about the bodach of Glenbogary?"

"On the whole he's been behaving splendidly since Miss M'Lucas's accident. He has only frightened the cook at Tostary into hysterics, and pitched a wheelbarrow of the roadman into the river, and driven one of Dougal the boatman's cows ever so far up the glen. But you haven't told us how you got on at Brex. I got your letter about the stag."

I now entered on a relation of my adventures in the north. When I spoke of the bishop, Ted interrupted—

"Were his daughters with him?"

"Yes; do you know them?"

"Oh yes! My father has a place in his diocese. We know the girls very well. Julia is engaged to the chaplain, and the other is—an awfully nice girl."

I thought it strange that Ted, who was always speaking of his friends, had never mentioned the Grocotes, but said nothing at the time; indeed, I had no opportunity of saying anything, for the pony shied right across the road, and nearly tumbled us all into the ditch.

"That was a narrow shave, factor. My incomparable Jehu, what did the pony shy at?"

"It's easy to see," cried Ted. "I do believe there is somebody lying over there in the heather."

We descended and went over to the place, and there we found the "man," sleeping soundly, stretched at full length in the long heather.

"We must waken him, or he will die of cold," I said.

This was done with some difficulty. The "man" at length sat up, rubbed his eyes, and looked wildly at us.

"Anathema maranatha," he cried.

"Don't you know your friend from the Pope?" said Bob.

"Och, och the tay! it's perilous times we live in; tays of rebuke and blaspheemy; put (in a whisper) do not forget my cousin in Greenock."

"What shall we do with him?" said the factor.

"Give him a drop out of the flask," was the prompt reply.

The production of this cordial brightened the "man" up wonderfully. We insisted on his walking after us, and did not lose sight of him till we came to Drissaig, where he had a lodging in the village. It was well we had not left him to his slumbers. Rain began to fall for the first time for many weeks, and by the time we turned off at the village it was coming down in torrents. Bob left us here, in spite of all remonstrances.

"I must be back at Reudle to-night. I promised Sarah; and I have also a great curiosity to meet with the bodach of Glenbogary."

He threw his Inverness cloak over his clerical costume, said good-bye, and strode away in the driving rain.

"Ay," said the factor, "he is a curious lad that.

He would put the fear upon the ministers to-tay? This is going to be a good fall of rain. At last the fish will be running up the river, to-night."

"Will we get fishing to-morrow?"

"I'm afraid not, the spate will pe far too big, but there will be plenty fish going up. Time for them."

We were wet through by the time we got to Stronbuy, but West Highland rain does no one any harm.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### CELTIC PHILOSOPHY.

ALL that night the rain came down as it can come down in those parts. We heard it pattering on the slates, beating against the windows of the cottage, causing the burns to come roaring down. The wind rose and howled around the house as if it would sweep it away, and when the fierce gusts came raging down the glen, it seemed to us, as we lay in our bed, that we might be found in the morning lying upon the Drissaig shore. When we looked out at daybreak the appearance of the outer world seemed entirely changed. From the road on the opposite side of the river to within a few yards of our own door was one sheet of water, which extended down the valley as far as we could see. While we were at breakfast the rain poured, and I thought as we saw the waters rising that we might be driven before the day was done to seek shelter from the factor.

Of course we could not venture over the door, and we spent the forenoon with our correspondence and a pile of unopened magazines that had come by the post. Among our letters was one from our respected chief, and the head of the department in the Govern-

ment service to which we belonged. The dear old fellow was glad to hear we were enjoying ourselves; there was no pressing necessity for our hurrying back, our substitutes were doing well; town was very empty; he had got the box of grouse all right. In the end of his letter he said—"By the way, is there a Highland gentleman of the name of Maclockie, or M'Lucas, in your neighbourhood? I am told he is a large shareholder in the Australian Meat Company, which is in high favour at present on the Exchange. A telegram has come from Suez that a ship loaded with mutton has come safely through the Red Sea with the meat in fine order. There is quite a run for shares. They say this Scotchman will make an enormous pile, and that poor householders like myself will be able to keep our families at small cost in future. Tompkins of the India Office, who has just come from the north, told me he met a leading man in the company, named Trant, at a ball near where you are, and that he was a friend of yours. Couldn't you get some shares through him for me?"

"I tell you what," said Ted, putting his feet against the mantelpiece, "I shall die a millionaire, for M'Lucas is going to make his fortune, and of course his niece gets it all, and that means me. I think I shall buy Stronbuy and make you a present of it, old boy, with all rights thereto belonging, especially salmon fishing. I have no doubt if you keep a canoe here, and live

encased in india rubber, you can exist very well. Just look how it rains!"

"I don't like you," said I, "even in joke, to be speaking as you are so fond of doing of Miss M'Lucas. It's not kindly to Bob; besides, you can have no possible chance."

"Chance! my dear fellow; it's not every day old Mac can get hold of an honourable. Hulloa! here's the factor. Just think of him being out on a day like this. I suppose he wants to cool down the fiery effect of all the whisky he consumed yesterday in Tomindoun."

The factor passed the window while he was talking, and I went to the door to speak to him.

"What in earth brought you out on a day like this, factor?" I said. "I'm sure you are wet to the skin."

"Oh, it's nothing, sir. I was just on the hull looking after the bit pony."

"It seems to me you highlanders never know when you are wet."

"Perhaps not, sir," replied the factor, slyly drawing his hand across his mouth; "but we always know when we are *dry!*"

This was an unmistakable hint for a dram, which was instantly administered.

"'Deed, sir, I am the petter for that, for it's fery wet outside. What do you think, shentlemen, 'the man' came up from Drissaig this morning."

"Do you mean Mr Croker's man?"

"Teed, yes; I think he was feared we might tell upon him that we found him in the heather. So he came up by crossing the river at the big bridge below the manse, and he's up yonder with the wife groaning away, and drying himself at the fire, and singing psalms. I got rather tired of it myself—a little of that goes a long way—so I came out upon the hull wet as it was."

"Do you think you could get Ballachantui and Toons over this afternoon," said Ted. "It's rather dull here having nothing to do."

"Cartainly, sir; cartainly. I will go over with the pony and tell them, and they can come round by the upper glen where the bridges are standing. The bridges down here are off long ago. They'll be half way to Amerikey by this time."

Towards evening the weather cleared, and our two neighbours made their appearance and were heartily welcomed. The squatter also came over the hill to see how it had fared with us during the flood, and we sat cheerily enough round the fire.

"What would you say," said Ted, "to have the 'man' over?"

"Even so," said Ballachantui, "if we are to hev a game at the cards he'll no approve; but if you put him in a corner with a pottle and a glese he'll no mind what is going on. He's a poor, weak, narrow creature.'

The 'man' was accordingly brought over, and after

a few observations ensconsed himself in a corner of the room. Ballachantui, the squatter, Ted, and I had a rubber at whist, and then engaged in promiscuous conversation over a tumbler of toddy. For a time our talk was of things local—the approaching election, the bodach of Glenbogary, and the love affair of Trant.

"They're telling me," said Toons, "that he's living the now in the Drissaig Inn; put he's over at Maolachy every tay."

"And were you never young yourself, Toons," said Ballachantui. "They say you were the poy for the lasses in your day, though on Sabbath in the kirk you look as if the putter would not melt in your mouth."

"Och, Ballachantui, it's the fun you are always upon; put she's a fine girl, Miss M'Lean, whatever, and it's she that's the favourite over at Tostary. I was hearing that M'Lucas hes a crate fancy for her, and may pe will leave her some of his siller."

"It's a pity, in my opinion, she should be married to yon Edinburgh man of the law. He'll pe long pefore he'll make salt to his kail, yon one. I'm thinking this Australian meat man has some prains, which is more than the lawyer hes, though they're saying he wants into the Parliament."

"They're telling me that prains is not of much use in Parliament at the present time," said Toons. "It's Mr Farquhar is pusy with the reading!"

During this talk the squatter, to whom he referred, had been perusing attentively a number of the *Nineteenth Century*, in which was a learned article on Evolution. He now threw it down, with the remark, which gave our conversation quite a philosophical turn—

"They *are* going it fast, these philosophers!"

"Even so," said Ballachantui. "My wife was standing the other tay at the toor, when she sees one of these philosophers coming up the hull, and she thought it was one of the grinding-stone men, and ran into the house for some knives to give him to sharpen. When she came out there was the philosopher tearing down the hull as if the teevil was after him."

"May pe he was," said Toons.

"Hoots," said the squatter, "it's a velocipede you are thinking of. I'm speaking of a philosopher."

"Even so," said Ballachantui.

"Yes," said the squatter, "they say that man was evolved as they call it—there's a lot about it here. They say millions of years ago that there was carbon and oxygen, and hydrogen and nitrogen, thrown together by chance."

"That's what's in the chemical manures isn't it?" interpolated Toons.

"Well," continued the squatter, "these united to form a blab of living jelly, and from this came the worm, and from the worm the fish, and from the fish

the ape; and after ages had passed the ape parted with his tail and his hair, and received a larger brain. This ape lived in the island of Lemuria."

"Ay, it's off the coast of the Lews," said Toons, "I was there once at the fishing."

"No, the island was in the Indian ocean, and is now lost. Well, the ape lived there, and, at last, he gave over his howling, and became a talking person—a man in fact."

"I was hearing M'Kay," said Toons, "speaking apout it the other Sabbath in the Gaelic. He said it was a man called Tarwin was putting out these notions. Faith, M'Kay sorted him, well: he's a ferry clever man, and knows all apout these deep things. He said if he had Tarwin there in that church, he would knock over his fine reasonings in five minutes."

"He must be a very egotistical man your minister," said Ted, who was stretched full length upon the sofa.

"Even so," said Ballachantui, "that's shust what he is—*eggo*tistical, an egg is full of itself, and so is M'Kay. Put I wouldn't wonder myself put there's something in what they say of man coming from the animal. I've thought on it many a time; you know yon red-headed minister at Kilbeg."

"Fine that," said Toons.

"Well, did you ever see a man so like a fox as he is? There was a sporting man once said in the steampoat,

'If I could get a fox with a head like that I would give five pounds for him.' "

"Ay, and it's a fox in the nature he is too," said Toons.

"Even so," said Ballachantui, "you'll mind, Toons, about Mrs Flannigan, the Irishwoman, and the pig?"

"What was it? Toons," said I.

"Och, nothing," replied he, "but a discussion; we were going to Falkirk py the 'Clandsman,' and some of us was having a dram in the fore cabin."

"And a ferry coot dram it was," interjected Ballachantui.

"Ay, you're a goot judge of that," said Toons; "well, great disputings arose about religion, as is often the case over a dram, and at last an impudent white-faced creature from Manchester, who had been at Stornoway, said out quite loud that a man had no more soul than a pig, and that when he died he was just like a pig."

"Ay, he was a *poor, poor* creature," said Ballachantui.

"Well," continued Toons, "we was all dumfoundered with his words, but there was a Free Church minister, who was lying on the sofa, gets up with a shump to pe at him, when Kate Flannigan, Irish Kate, they called her, sings out, 'Arrah, now, your riverence, will you not let the baste alone? Has he not said he was a pig, and the more you pull him by

the tail the louder he'll squale.' Gosh! there was such a laugh got up, the Manchester pody got quite green in the face, and went away without saying one word. He was settled that time whatever."

"Even so," said Ballachantui, after a pause, "put I do not like the way ministers hes of abusing men like this man Tarwin, that's putting out new notions on religion, and things of that kind."

"Nor I either," said the squatter; "you would hear of Dr M'Tavish from Perth—the great preacher was down here in a yacht—Ballachantui?"

"A ferry clever man, I pelieve," said Toons.

"He was preaching to the sailors one Sunday, and denouncing the infidel Gibbon. The sailors all thought he was meaning Mr M'Gibbon, the factor, and thought he had been doing some awful thing, though there is not a finer man on this country side."

"Even so," said Ballachantui, "as they say in the Gaelic, 'it's earth to earth on the mouth of Oran."

"What's that?" said Ted.

"It's an old saying," said Toons, "we hev in this country. When St Columba was puilding his church, long ago, in Iona, he was greatly troubled with evil spirits and things of that kind, and at last he was told the only way to keep them quiet was to bury a man alive. So Oran was buried; put after a time, when the church was built, they dug him up again, and there he was, quite hearty; and he said there was

no such place as hell and purgatory in the next world. When Columba heard this he was ferry angry, and cried to put him back into the hole, and put plenty earth on the top of him. Whenever people try to silence others, and make them keep quiet whether they will or no, they say in the Gaelic, 'It's yearth to yearth on the mouth of Oran, as Columkille said.' I've heard it many's the time."

"Even so;" said Ballachantui, "and it would be petter for ministers to answer men like that, who puts out new notions, than trying to smother them with earth, like Oran. They should take the pull by the horns, as the saying is."

"For my part," said Toons, "I would rather take a pull any day py the tail nor py the horns, put I'm thinking myself all them deep things philosophers is speaking apout is shust mystery—shust mystery."

"Even so," said Ballachantui satirically, "shust mystery! Whenever the ministers can't understand a thing, they give a groan, and say it's shust mystery! They're like the lad from Coll that Duncan Sinclair, Achinreir, had."

"What about him?" said the squatter.

"Och," said Ballachantui, "Duncan, you know, had a mart—a cow that he killed for meat in the winter time—and he had finished it all put one piece, which he kept for an occasion. So one tay, when he was expecting the minister and Doctor M'Aulay, and some more, to dinner, he sent his lad down to the

cellar to bring up the piece of beef. Well then, back comes the lad with a face so long as my arm. 'There's no beef there, Mr Sinclair,' says he, 'it's a great mystery! I put my hand into the parrel, and felt among the brine, but, sure as death, it was all gone. So I turned up the parrel, and there, the rats had made a great hole in the bottom, and dragged the peef all out.' Duncan was terribly put about; but at last a thought comes into his mind—'Why didn't the brine run out of the hole?' says he. 'Oh,' says the lad, 'it's shust mystery!' Faith, mystery or no mystery, Duncan soon sent him apout his pusiness."

"Ay, he's a fine man, Duncan," said Toons.

"For my part," said the squatter, after a time, reverently, "I've often thought, when I was alone in the bush in New Zealand, that it gives one a grand idea of Him that's over all—this idea of evolution, as they call it. If a man invents a machine, others go on improving it; but in God's plan it goes on improving itself."

"Yes," said Ted, "there's something in that, Mr Farquhar. "Watt made the first steam-engine, but it has taken many a brain to make it as perfect as it is now. If he had been able to build it on such a plan, and to put into it such a force that it would go on developing from itself such improvements on itself till it became adapted to all the needs of man, what power that would show!"

"Ay," said the squatter, "I remember once in the colony camping out under an enormous tree that would almost cover over a town as big as Tomindoun, and thinking to myself, what a wonderful thing it was that it all grew from a little seed you could hold in your hand, through the power God put into it at first."

"Cracious!" said Toons.

"And many a time," continued the squatter, with solemnity, "I've thought since how much grander is the idea of the world-wide tree of life, as it were, with its root in the dust and its top reaching the skies, growing out of one little seed or germ, into which God put a force of His own; and yet to hear M'Kay and men of that kind talk, you would imagine people holding opinions like these were Atheists."

"Even so," said Ballachantui, who was warming up with philosophic fervour and toddy combined. "What is M'Kay put shust a blockhead? I often wonder, Toons, you could put up with him."

"Och, shust pe quiet, Ballachantui. I'm no saying M'Kay is a clever man, but he is a good man; and a coot man is petter nor a clever man, as he was saying when he was preaching in the gaelic upon these things. 'There is always one question,' he said, 'at the pack of another; so it's no good bothering the mind about the things of science—falsely so-called.'"

"Even so," said his friend, gleefully chuckling. "He got a lesson in that way himself at the school

examination over at Cachladu. 'On what did the sarpint go after his fall?' says he to Mrs M'Cubbin's son. 'On dust,' says the poy. 'Please, Sir,' says he, 'on what did he go pefore that?' Man, you should have seen him; he got quite red in the face, and could get nothing to say, poor man. The young ladies from Frackersaig, and Miss M'Lean, trying to keep from laughing, was a great sight.

"Ay, I daresay," said Toons, "they think themselves very clever, and so do you; but it's my opinion that Mr M'Kay knows what he's talking apout as well as them nor you either."

"Even so! even so," retorted the other; "he ought to know what he talks apout, for he's always talking apout himself!"

At this juncture of the conversation something approaching a quarrel seemed imminent between our two worthy neighbours, for Toons was highly incensed at the ridicule cast upon his pastor; but after a little more sparring, the belligerents settled down in quietness to their toddy.

"The worst of it is," said Ted, trying to lead the conversation back again into a quieter and less personal channel, "these men of science won't believe in anything but what they can see and measure with their compasses, and get all round, as if the soul of the universe, and of man, were to be discerned by their microscope or telescope, or scalpel or crucible."

"Och," said Toons, "when Mr Cheese the quaker

had the shooting at Frackersaig; you'll mind Cheese, Ballachantui, he was an awfully good man, and had preachings on the Sabbath evening!"

"I was never ferry sure about that man myself," said Ballachantui, "he's a teetotaller."

"Well," continued Toons; "he was arguing with Lachlan Lamont, at Stigarstra one day. Lachlan never goes inside of a kirk door, and Mr Cheese was trying to get him to change his ways. Lachlan was ferry rude to him, and at last says he, 'it's all ferry fine, Mr Cheese, to come here with them fine stories about faith, but I won't believe in anything but what I can see, though you would give me all Stigarstra to myself, says he.' 'Does thee believe in London?' says Cheese. 'In course I do,' says Lachlan, 'though I never saw it with my own eyes, I know them as has seen it.' 'Then,' says Cheese, 'does thee not pelieve in anything, except thee or thy friends have seen it?' 'No I do not,' says Lachlan. 'Did thee ever see thine own brains?' says Cheese, going out of the door. 'Does thee believe thee has any brains?' Lachlan met his match that time, whatever."

At this period of the evening, and while we were laughing heartily at Toons' story, "the man," who had been hitherto silent, and indeed almost forgotten by us all, came forward into the centre of the room—a weird looking figure! The black handkerchief, usually tied over his head, hung to a side, and his eyes glared like coals of fire. Holding on to the table with one

hand, he raised the other aloft, and said in a deep guttural voice, "Shentlemen, I uplift my testimony against Erastianism, Popery, Prelacy, moderatism, organs, science, human hymns, biblical criticism, Sabbath preaking, phelosophy, pheelology, voluntaryism, knowledge, and learning of every kind. Tophet is open! Lo! the fire is already kindled!"

This rigmarole, evidently a formula of commination which he was accustomed to use, he poured quickly forth, and then groped his way to the door, and out into the darkness, leaving us in a profound silence.

"Cracious!" said Toons at last.

"Even so!" said Ballachantui, "it is indeed time to be going." So our guests departed. It was late, or rather *early*. The rain had ceased, the river gone down to something like its normal state. All was quiet as we looked out after our friends, and the grouse were beginning to crow.

"Upon my word," said Ted, as we went to bed, "what a yarn we had to-night!"

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A CONTROVERSIAL YARN.

THE river was in grand order next day. There was a good strong current running between the banks, and a strong west wind blowing right up stream. There were long reaches of black water in the river that could only be fished when this was the case, for the banks were high, and unless there was half a gale of wind the water was so calm that there was no good trying to fish it. Ted went down to the low part of the water, and was to fish up-stream from Drissaig till we should meet half way. The factor and I commenced operating close to Stronbuy. For a time I got nothing but common burn trout, but after going about a mile down I caught one sea-trout after another. Lively they were, and fresh run, from the sea. The factor seemed quite inspirited by my success, and entertained me with a succession of fishing stories, all of which belonged to the region of the marvellous.

"That's something like fishing, sir, but the fishing now is not like what I mind it."

"Is it so much fallen off?"

"You'll perhaps no believe me, sir, but in one hour I

caught with the rod as many salmon just as I could carry on my back, in this very stream."

"Did you really?"

"Och, yes, surely! We used to salt parrels of them."

"Most wonderful."

"I'll tell you a more wonderful thing nor that," Mr Gunter. "I was one day fishing in a pool below the house where some ducks was swimming, and for fun I cast my flies over one of them and hooked him. He made a great splutter and broke the cast, and off he set down the water with the flies after him, and he hadna been gone very far when a salmon took the fly that was tied to him."

"Now, factor, draw it mild!"

"It's truth I'm telling you. It was the curiosest thing you ever seed in your life. Sometimes the fish would pull the bird under water, and then up he would come flapping with his wings and making terrible noise—you would hear him all over the glen. At last I saw the bird was getting the best of it, so I slipped down quietly with the gaff, and I creepit down to the side of the burn where the bird was, and I sees the salmon quite done. I made one dive and whipped him out, and a fine fish he was."

"Well, factor, that was most extraordinary!"

"I could tell you a more wonderful thing than that. There was a man over on the Tostary side went with his gun to the water when the salmon were jumping thick, so he takes his stand, and when one jumps he

fires and kills it; but there was a heavy charge in the gun and it threw him back, and he fell on a grey hen and killed her, and when he gets up he found he had shot a hare on the other side of the river, was passing when he fired; so he goes home with a salmon and a grey hen and a hare all from the one shot! It was very wonderful!"

"Very!"

"This is the black pool. You had petter put a big fly on, there's salmon lying here whiles. I would not wonder though there's one here the day."

I followed the factor's advice—put on a new fly and fished the pool carefully. Below the stump of a tree, at the river's edge, there was a swirl, and I hooked a fish of considerable size. The factor then sat down and philosophically filled his pipe.

"He'll give you some play that one, sir. He will keep you going like the Sheriff's stot."

He did keep me going for a good while; but I mastered him at last, and was fortunate enough to see him stretched on the grass—a shapely fish of about ten pounds.

"I think, factor, we'll have out the flask after all this labour. We deserve a dram."

"Ay, may pe we would not pe the worse for it after *our* exertions."

"What was it you said about the Sheriff's stot just as I hooked the fish?"

"Och, nothing! It's a word we hev in these parts.

There was a little Sheriff once at Tomindoun was very fond of fishing near the public road, to make a show off to them as was passing. One day what did his fly do but hook a stot was in the field by the tail, and there was the Sheriff playing him like a salmon. When he would wind up close, and was putting out his hand to catch the fly, off the beast would go again, and his reel making a whirr, and all the people on the road like to split their sides laughing! It was a great divarsion indeed!"

We resumed work again after this interlude. I caught no more large fish, but had a good basket of sea trout when I met Ted. He had not been so lucky. Perhaps he had not fished so steadily as he might have done. He had met Trant, who was also fishing, and had spent some time talking with him. Ted owned they had smoked one or two pipes together. The escapade at the Presbytery was making a great noise everywhere. Old M'Lucas had heard of it, and was for issuing a warrant for Bob's apprehension. If he had committed murder he couldn't have abused him worse than he did. Trant had been over at Tostary and found the old savage particularly irritable. Dr M'Aulay, who was there also, was afraid that these terrible fits of passion would seriously tell upon his health. His niece had rather a hard time with him at present, for on the slightest provocation he would go on raging, Trant said, like a madman. The bodach was still haunting Tostary. Sir Donald M'Intosh, the

late M.P., was to be buried next day at Kilsnorey, and Maolachy's nephew, the advocate, was expected down. Everybody was expected to attend the funeral. All this news Ted had learned from Trant. Finally, after leaving him, he had forgathered with a shepherd, whose house was at hand, and who had asked us up to take some refreshment.

"That will pe Ronaldson, Frackersaig's shepherd," said the factor. "He's from the south—a quiet, decent man. That's his house up the brae yonder."

Ronaldson, who gave us a cordial welcome, was one of the south country shepherds generally to be met with on large Highland farms. They are from the border counties of Scotland, and mingle but little with the Highlanders. They are very intelligent, generally take in a newspaper, and read whatever books they can lay hold of, and their solitary life is one that tends to reflection. Ronaldson was one of the best of his class, very quiet and sagacious. A little book-case, well stored, stood in a corner of his clean-swept kitchen. From the rafters hung many mutton hams, and his wife was busy baking cakes at the cheery fire. On the table lay a pamphlet upon a well-known ecclesiastical case then agitating Scotland and affecting important questions of biblical criticism. Taking it up, I expressed my surprise at finding it there, little thinking that I was setting agoing the spinning of a long yarn, which continued all the time we were at our repast.

"It was my auld maister," said Ronaldson, "sent

me the bit buik. He's the laird of Grueldykes, near Dumfries, and, being an elder in the Assembly, takes great interest in this case, ye ken. It's making a great noise among the Highlanders down here. They seem to think they will get up some morning and find their Bibles taken clean awa frae them. No that it wad mak muckle difference, for they dinna read them."

"Is it the Bible," said the factor, "you'd be after taking from us? There would pe the war pefore you could do that."

"Aweel, factor," said the shepherd, "ye forget how Dr M'Audle was over in yer ain hoose when ye were frae hame, and he asked yer son if the Bible was regularly used in the family. 'Ay,' said your loon, "faither uses it whiles to sharpen his razor."

"Well, though I am no saying," replied the factor, "that I do not read it so often as I should, it's a fine thing to know that it's in the hoose, and you can put your hand upon it at any time. I'm not aye dram-drinking, but it's a fine thing to know there's a drop in the house. I'm sure, Ronaldson, when you come in cold off the hill you like to know the bottle is in the press, though perhaps it's no often ye tak it out, except when ye have veesitors like ye have to-day."

"But, factor," struck in Ted, "old man, no one wishes to take away the Bible from you."

"Well, Mr O'Halloran, I don't know. They're

doing the same thing as taking it away when they're making out it's no true. It's just like taking the goot speerit out of the bottle, and filling it with water. There's little pith in that. The way some is going on is just awful. I'm told there is a minister saying that Jonah was an emblem of evil, and another saying that the whale was a public-hoose where Jonah was taken in, and when, after three days, they had stripped everything off the sailor they just cast him out. It's most awful! Not but I'll no deny there is deeficulties. It hes always peen a deeficulty to me how five men could eat three thousand loaves! I canna eat more nor one myself at any time, put perhaps it is that was the miracle."

"An' did ye, factor," said Ronaldson, "see a whale yerself in a' yer travels wad tak in a man in sich a manner?"

"I'm no saying that I did, Ronaldson; the whales in the part Jonah was in was maype a pit bigger in the throat and in the stomach than those upon this coast. Put I wish you people would tak the lesson Mr Shaw, the minister, gave yon foolish body, John Farquhar, who was always bringing him difficult questions like the whale and things of that kind."

"What did he say, factor?" I asked.

"'Well,' says he, 'if you had a good pit of beef put down pefore you when you was hungry, it's not on the bones you would pegin first. There's fine juicy, sappy things in the Pible, and it would pe

petter to pe feeding on them than to pe worrying upon dry pones like the whale.'"

"Well, factor, take another drop," said Ronaldson. "I think yer about right; and if you would leave out some of the dry bones, as ye call them, that are gey difficult to swallow, there will be plenty left to guide you and me on the right road."

"I don't know," said the factor, helping himself, "I'm whiles thinking that everything is going. Arn't they getting up a temperance society in Tomindoun, and Croker of Drumle in the chair, and singing songs apout water, and Dougald M'Kechnie, the drunken cobbler, has got over his door, 'Temperance Bootmaker!' Isn't it just terrible to think upon?"

"His boots are often *tight* enough," said Ronaldson, quietly.

"Yes," said the factor, not noticing the little joke, "and there was a man staying with Cheese the Quaker —a vegetarian he called himself, going apout telling us we should live on grass, like Nebuchadnesar. He went into his fine talk over to old Miss M'Neil at Hogary, but he didn't make much of her, for says she, 'I was always used to say grace before meat, and I'm no going to change now.'"

"Then," said Ted, "you think whisky, beef, and the Bible will all go together?"

"Ay! and it's little we'll hev left in this poor country after that! indeed no!"

"Hoot, factor," said the shepherd, "the doctrines

getting up in the kirk about the bible are na sae extreme as those yer mentioning."

"I don't know that," said the factor, hotly, "arn't they saying that Moses didn't write Genesis? Could anything pe worse nor that? When I heard it first, it just took my preath clean away like the spirits of wine I once took by mistake."

"Man, factor, what does it matter wha wrote Genesis? if there's good grossets on my bushes in the yaird, I dinna care muckle wha planted them."

"Ye see, Ronaldson, yer no Heeland, and are no fit to see the blessing of ancient things."

"Well, that may be," replied Ronaldson, "I'm no Heelan, sure enough, but I'll tell ye, Mr Gunter, what I was once thinking upon the hill after I got this bit buik."

"Well, Ronaldson, what was it?" I said.

"I was thinking I could guide a stranger like yourself over the shoulder of Benmore in any weather, by night or day, in sunshine or storm, supposing you wanted to get to the other side: I'm a good guide for that. But, supposing you asked me questions about the plants on the hill side, or the geology, as they call it, of the mountain, I could gie ye but little information to depend on."

"What are ye havering at noo?" said the factor.

"Well, ye see, sir," continued the shepherd, "the Bible is a gude guide to the other side, it's like sent to teach us the road, but it's no sent to teach us other

things in the bye going, and maybe is not to be depended on about them. You'll mind, factor, the foolish man at Godaig used to tell fortunes with the Bible?"

"Fine that," replied the factor, "he had a long needle, and after he would say some words, he would put the needle into the book, and the verse where the point of the needle rested told what he wanted to know. I mind he told about the herrings coming into the loch the year of the big fishing."

"Nonsense," said Ronaldson.

"Ay, but he did though," reiterated the factor, "I got a big haul myself. It was with the money I made I bought the house in Tomindoun that gives me the vote for Parliament."

"Ha! ha!" said Ronaldson, "it's a pity to see you believe such nonsense. Ye Hielandmen are unco supurteetious. The Bible is no gien to tell fortunes, and it's no gien to teach about astronomy, or even history, but if we use it for what it is gien for, it will answer the purpose well. It's the spirit we should look to, and no the letter."

"Hooch," said the factor, laughing, "that's what Dr M'Audle said to Thomas, the herd at Maolachy, when he went to him for baptism. 'I hope you are prepared, Thomas,' said he, 'for so important an occasion.' 'Well,' said Thomas, 'I am not padly prepared for my condition in life. I've a kist fou o' bannocks, and twa stane of good cheese, and a braxy ham.'

'Ah! Thomas,' said the Doctor, 'you are indeed carnally minded; it's the letter, and no the speerit o' the ordinance ye've been keeping in mind.' 'Ah, weel,' said Thomas, 'I didn't forget that neither, for I've a jar of rael good stuff from Duncan the innkeeper.'"

After a good laugh at the factor's story, we began to get ready to walk home, but the shepherd returned to the subject which had evidently taken a deep hold of his mind.

"Well, ye ken, gentlemen, no to deteen you, thae Psaumes—many's the time they come into my mind on the hill side. Many a time when I'm up yonder, I'll say to myself, 'I to the hills will lift mine eyes.' They tak' an awful grip of the heart thae Psaumes, if an angel would tell me yon twenty-third Psaume was no inspired, I dinna think I would believe him. But yon cursing Psaumes is terrible, I canna thole them at all."

"Yer wrang there," said the factor, who was shouldering his basket, but who put it down on the floor again, "yer wrang there; do you mind Donald M'Lennan who was once at Cambuslaich?"

"I do that," said Ronaldson, "and a great blackguard he was."

"Well, then, he was in prison for taking a sheep by mistake, at least that was what he said, but the Lords o' Session would not believe him, and one tay when the meenister or chaplain came into the cell to visit

him, he found him reading the Bible vara attentive. 'Oh, my man,' says the meenister, 'I'm glad to see you occupied that way, you will find the Psalms you are reading very comforting.' 'Deed I do, sir,' says he, 'I was just reading the Psalms where David curses all his enemies, and I was hoping the curses would come on the heads of them who put me in here!' Ye see, Ronaldson, he got goot out of the cursing Psalms though you could get none!"

"Well, factor, if he did, I mak him welcome to ony comfort he could get. I'm thinking the Bible is like yon park doun by the burn side. If ye put a horse and cow, and a sheep and a goat in it, each would find good food in it according to his own nature."

"Ay," said the factor, strapping the basket on his back, "and if you put a donkey in it, he'll find thistles as you do, Ronaldson. It's time to pe going, shentlemen, if we are to try the upper pools. Speaking this way won't bring us there; 'wishes won't wash dishes,' as the lassie said."

On our way to the upper pools we saw coming flying at full speed towards us a lady on horseback.

"I declare," said Ted, "that is Miss M'Lucas."

"Ay, she's a kind lady yon," said the factor. "She's peen up at Achlorachan, where the mistress is no weel. She takes up jelly and things of that kind."

The heiress of Tostary stopped to speak with us, and to ask after our sport.

"I'm sorry to hear of this Presbytery affair," said

she, laughing, "at Tomindoun. How could you be so foolish! The ministers have all been preaching about it. There is an account of it in the *Times*."

"Nonsense!" cried Ted.

"I mean, of course, the *Oban Times*, which is far preferable to its namesake in London. We couldn't live here without it. It speaks of you, Mr O'Halloran, as a scion of the British aristocracy! Arn't you proud? I'm afraid you won't come and see humble people like us at Tostary any more."

"I was thinking of going over to-morrow," said Ted. "You know I've not seen the bodach yet."

"Oh, the poor bodach has been keeping very quiet; but as the moon is getting smaller, he may appear again. He likes dark nights. Arn't you to be at the funeral to-morrow?"

"I thought of going," I said. "By striking across the moor by the head of Loch Feeshinish, I could join it where the road turns off to Kilsnorey at the Tostary Falls."

"Then won't both of you come to us afterwards? My uncle will be delighted to see you. He'll drive you down from the churchyard."

"I'll go with pleasure," said Ted.

"I'm afraid you must excuse me, Miss M'Lucas. I require to be back here to-morrow night about some letters I'm expecting from London."

"Well, then, you must come and pay us a visit soon. Meantime, we must be content with the

scion of the aristocracy. Really, how honoured we are!"

With this she vanished at full speed.

"Honestly, Ted, what is taking you to Tostary again?" I said.

"Well, I'll tell you, old man. I am a lover of the fine arts, and you know old Tostary has some wonderful specimens. The portraits of 'Them as were pefore me' are magnificent. There is a delicious old woman in a muslin cap."

"Just so!"

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE AQUEDUCT.

TED and I put on our black clothes, and started from Stronbuy shortly after daybreak. We thought it a good plan to breakfast at Letter, and get the squatter's company to the funeral. We reached his house in good time, and were welcomed by Mrs Farquhar at the doorway.

"I am glad to see you, gentlemen. My husband will be down directly. Of course he is going to the funeral. You know Sir Donald was a cousin of mine, and not so far off either. His father was married to a Miss M'Rae from Kintail, who was the niece of a grand-uncle of mine. So I may say the late member and my people were nearly related. The whole country side will be at the burial, for, though Sir Donald did not come much among us, and lived mostly abroad, his family were much respected. I hardly expected, however, that you would appear at the gathering to-day."

"Why, Mrs Farquhar?"

"Oh, I thought you would be afraid of the clergy after the affair at the Presbytery. But I don't think you need be under any alarm. At first they were

angry enough, and some of the younger ones were for having you up before the Sheriff; but when they saw everybody all round laughing about it, they thought the best thing they could do was to laugh too."

"I hear Mr M'Lucas was very severe on the culprit?"

"Oh, dear me, yes! but nothing *he* could possibly do would be right. He's not the man he was, Tostary. I see him very much failed, and it takes very little to put him in a passion. His niece has a sore time of it with him, but I think it won't be for long."

"Perhaps," said Ted, "she will get a husband, and that will deliver our princess from durance vile."

"Perhaps, Mr O'Halloran, in that case she may only exchange one jailor for another. But here comes *my* jailor. Really, good man, ye've been late to-day."

"You see I had to get out my go-to-meeting clothes, and, as I hadn't had them on for a long time, I had some difficulty in finding them. The sun is coming out quite strong. We are likely to have a warm walk across the muirs."

The day was certainly warm and the sun hot, yet there was a feeling in the air of autumn. The moor was very wet and spongy; still the walk was very enjoyable, and shortly after noon we struck the road to Kilsnorey at the Tostary Falls, and sat down above the big pool where the murdered man was found, to wait till the funeral should appear. The squatter, of

course, told the whole story of the murder over again, and though he said little of a sceptical kind, I could see he had his own doubts as to the reality of the apparition.

"So many of these things are just tricks! I recollect, at Wellington, two spiritualists who set the whole town by the ears, but their dodge was discovered by a sharp native, and they were nearly cowhided out of existence. All the same, I am free to say that there are things that seem to me inexplicable. But I think I hear the sound of the bagpipe coming up the glen —the funeral can't be far off."

In a few minutes we heard the notes of the music quite distinctly; the bagpipe played a lament, and very weird it sounded, and soon after the procession, which was very large, came slowly in sight. First in advance walked a man in rusty black, bearing a bottle of whisky, of which every one whom he met was expected to partake, as a mark of respect. Then the piper, blowing with all his might; after him, the hearse. This was followed by a long stream of vehicles of all kinds, from the carriage and pair to the humble dogcart. One after another they swept past us. Then came a long, straggling stream of pedestrians, and the procession was closed by a cart carrying refreshments for such as wanted them.

We fell in behind, immediately in advance of the cart with the provisions, before which marched Dougal More in his Sunday best. His face was

radiant with smiles, and his whole demeanour seemed more fitting for a wedding than a funeral.

"Ay, sir," said he, rubbing his hands, "this is a beerying of the right kind. At M'Cracken's funeral there was just a gleese of wine for the shentry in the parlour. It was perhaps well enough for a man like him from the South, but Sir Donald was the real Highland shentleman, and it's good to put him under the turf with all proper respeck."

"I fancy, Dougal, you have plenty good things in the cart?"

"Ou ay! there's cheeses and ends of muttons, and big pieces of boiled beef just like the rocks on the shore. It's the real shentleman Sir Donald was. I was hearing he had in his will there was to be plenty going at his buryin."

"Where are you to have the refreshments?"

"Oh, in the minister's barn at Kilsnorey; it's close upon the churchyaird. May pe if you would look in to-morrow morning you would find some there yet," said Dougal with a grin.

"Sir Donald must have been well thought of when so many are present to-day," said Ted.

"Ou ay, Mr Halloran! he was thought a heap of, but between you and me it's no that a'together brings so many of the shentlemen here to-day; you see they will pe thinking apout the new memper—one goeth and another cometh, ye see."

"Who are they thinking of?"

"Oh! what deve I know. I'm too small a man to be knowing what they are thinking of, but I'm no blind, and I can see Mister John M'Callum, Esquire, of Achnaslishaig, J.P., going apout so friendly taking every one py the hand as if his ferry heart was going out to them. He's a proud man Achnaslishaig, and when I see him doing these things I know what it means."

"Parliament, I suppose?"

"Just that, sir, just that; and then we have the Aqueduct doing the same thing as Achnaslishaig."

"The what, Dougal?"

"The Aqueduct, surely! the law man from Edinbro', you know."

"Oh, the advocate?"

"Ay, ay! that's what they call him. We ay ca him the aqueduct. He's Maolachy's nephew, and is wanting to get into Parliament too. Who put him?"

"He is from Edinburgh?"

"Ay, there's a heap of his kind there. I was up at the court as a witness in a fishing case that Frackersaig had with Mr Croker of Drumle about the right to the Kilblaen Loch. Gosh me! I went into a big room yonder, and it was just hotching with aqueducts like fleas in a blanket! There they were walking up and down like the captain of a ship on the deck of his vessel—back and forward from morning to night."

"I daresay there are a great many of them. Edinburgh is the headquarters of the law."

"Ay is't. They all hed on wigs. They tell me it's to keep their prains in a state of heat, else no ideas can come out of them. Same way no chickens can come from cold eggs."

"I never heard that idea assigned before, Dougal."

"Well, it was your own friend, Stronbuy, told me; he was what they call a haver in the fishing case. It's maybe havering he was in reality. He told me that there was many of them shentlemen wouldn't make in a day so much as I make at the drains. Put there they go walking back and forward all day long, like so many pendoolums of a clock. It's very curious!"

"What sort of a fellow is Maolachy's nephew?"

"Oh, well, he's no much of a muchness. He's bare-footed on the crown of his head with weering a wig. He's a ferry conceited man. I mind once they had a story when he was growing a mustash; he said to Stronbuy he thought he would dye it—it was so fair. 'Let it alone,' said Stronbuy, 'it will soon die itself.' He is ferry jokey, Stronbuy."

"You must point out the advocate to me when we get to the churchyard, Dougal."

"I'll do that, sir. They say he is ferry anxious to write Em Pay to the end of his name. It's no much *he* can *pay;* but there's a comittee in Edinbro, they tell me, to pay for him. M'Lucas and Frackersaig is terrible keen for him."

"What side of politics is he on?"

"Tory! Tory! What then put Tory; put his uncle Maolachy is the other kind, same as the man we're putting in the ground to-tay."

We now reached the churchyard. It was situated near the sea-shore, and surrounded by a low wall. It was one of the old burying places so often seen in the western Islands. In the centre was an old ruined church, dating possibly from the time of Columba; around it lay many graves, most of them utterly uncared for; weeds and nettles grew thick everywhere. It was within the walls of the old church Sir Donald was to be laid—the family burying-place for generations.

The bishop, of whom we had heard at the Presbytery from Mr M'Rory, met the funeral procession at the gate of the enclosure, reciting the beautiful and well-known service of the Church of England. He had but read the preliminary sentence when Dougal, who seemed to look at the service as a part of the ceremony with which he had no concern whatever, pulled my arm violently, and pointed to a long thin fair-haired gentleman with a stoop, who had just entered the churchyard, saying in a most audible voice—

"That's him yonder."

"Who?" I whispered.

"The aqueduct, in coorse."

After the service was ended I parted with Ted, who went with M'Lucas in his carriage. Mr M'Lean,

Maolachy, came up to me, and after a few remarks, asked me to come and stay a day or two with him.

"Come over to-morrow," he said. "The shooting has been very poor with us, and the birds are awfully wild; but we may have a day at the seals. Trant is coming over, and my nephew will perhaps be with us. The foolish boy is going to stand for the county. Tostary and some others have put him up to it. He has not my support, for I'm an old whig, and I hope he will get a good drubbing."

I agreed to accept his kind invitation and go over next day.

On going out to the high road I found Ballachantui and Toons debating with the squatter as to whether they should go home at once or to the barn, whither most of the commonalty were tending.

"I think we should go," said Toons; "it's right to pay proper respect to them that's away from us."

"Even so," said Ballachantui, "and to the goot things that them that's away has left behind."

It was agreed that we should go into the barn for a few minutes, which we accordingly did. As we entered we heard the voice of the "man."

"Dod that's Croker's 'man,' I do pelieve," said Toons. "M'Kay will pe awful angry if he hears that he officiated."

Looking in we found that the company were seated at tables that literally groaned beneath their load, and all looked most impatient for the prayer to come

to an end. It was no sooner finished than there was a general clatter of plates and really hearty conviviality. We waited until "the memory of the departed" was drunk in solemn silence, and then came away; but the festivities would be continued probably far into the night.

"It's no every day they get a barrownight's grave to drink over," said Ballachantui, as we struck into the moor.

"'Deed no," said Toons, somewhat regretfully, for his heart was evidently with the feasters.

"Yon was a fine prayer the man in the sark put up out of his bit book," said Ballachantui. "He's been well prayed over, the barrownight. We had two meenisters at the house cawing away about him, forbye the Beeshop. Muckle good may it do him. He would just lie as sound in Kilsnorey without their talk. He never was a kirk man, Sir Donald; 'deed he never entered a kirk from June to January. I don't see why he needed all that praying to put him to sleep. The prayer-books he used were never bound."

"I suppose you mean cards?" I said.

"Even so, just that. He spent all his rents gambling. I wonder what he'll do without that where he is now, if he's in any place. There wouldna be muckle soul to be found, I think, when his body was taken away; it must have been squeezed, poor thing, into very small bulk, like the lobsters that go all to shell."

"Do you know," said Toons, "it often looks to me, when I see the yearth shoveled in, as if that was the end of everything."

"I wouldna say that on no account," said Ballachantui; "you might as well say, Toons, that if I smashed your fiddle there would be an end of you. If I give you a new fiddle you could play again your strathspeys and Tullochan and highland fling as well's ever. It's my opinion the body's just the instrument of the mind, and it will maybe get a new fiddle like to play upon. I think it will myself, with all my heart."

"Men in all ages have thought so," I said.

"Even so," said Ballachantui; "but men in all ages used to think the sun went round the yearth, and they were wrong; put it seems to me that this life is no complete without another. It's like one of them stories in the magazines Dr M'Audle sends apout the parish, 'To be finished in next numper' written on the end of it."

"We know little apout it," said Toons.

"Even so; the caterpillar knows little apout the putterfly, but he pecomes one for all that. I'll no deny that I hev my doubts whiles when I'm low and down like. The doubts come doun on me like corbies on a weak sheep that's beginning to stagger, but when my mind is strong, and in a healthy state, it gives a good kick, and the doubts fly away."

"It'll pe a curious thing," said Toons, "whatever,

if yon man who cheated me at the Falkirk of the price of my flock of ewes is no punished. He went out of the world in honour and glory, and an elder of the kirk, but I pelieve he'll hev to pay for it yet. I do hold to that."

"Even so," said Ballachantui. "I pelieve in righteousness. Put, Mr Farquhar, to keep to this side the Jordan, what's going to be the end of the election? The two candidates were there to-day, looking as if they were in love with everybody."

"They say," answered Farquhar, "that M'Lucas and Frack[illegible]saig are taking up the advocate very heartily. On the other hand, Mr M'Callum is well supported too, and the Liberal interest is pretty strong."

"Who do you support, Ballachantui? What party are you of?"

"I'm of a ferry small party—the party of Ballachantui—that's my party. I'll vote for the man I think the pest man. I'll hev no hand in sending a 'staggering bob' into Parliament."

"I suppose we shall have a lively time of it," I remarked.

"Ay," said Toons, "they'll pe at it hammer and tongs next week. I must find out who my laird will pe for."

"Do you vote with him?"

"Always," said Toons. "Decidedly; there's no use 'living in Rome and fighting with the Pope,' as

the saying is. My laird was Tory last time, so I suppose it's on the advocate's committee I'll pe."

"Even so," said Ballachantui. "Toons, ye see, is wanting a new lease, but he'll pe between the devil and the deep sea this time, for M'Kay, his minister, is sure to be for M'Callum, so, with the laird at him on the one side, and the minister progging at him on the other, he is not to pe envied at all."

"Nothing for nothing is my motto," said Toons. "If the laird gives me shustice apout the land he gets my vote; if he doesn't do that he'll want it."

"Even so; that's the principles of the bit shoemaker at Drissaig, when the doctor went to ask him why he was not attending church. 'Nothing for nothing, doctor,' says he, 'if you don't get your shoes made at my shop, I won't get my preaching done at yours.' I cannot say it's ferry high principles to go upon, Toons; but then I'm not a Free Kirk elder like you."

"I've always been a conservative," said the squatter. "I saw too much of Radicalism out in the colonies. Though I don't think much of young M'Lean personally, I intend to support him, and I told him so to-day."

"Seems to me," said Toons, "there's no so many of the quality going into the Parliamints as used to. Sir Donald was a barrownight, and the memper afore him was a lord's son; but they're of a lower kind now."

"Ay," said the squatter, "what we call in the fank second cuts."

"Even so, maype," ventured Ballachantui, "but I'm no sure put them's from the people, and from among them, can represent them petter than them's in higher station and knows little apout them."

"We didn't find it so in the colony—the men sent in were very illiterate often—fellows with a great deal of clap-trap and jaw, but little more. I'm afraid this Mr M'Callum is not of a much higher stamp. I would far rather we had a real county man than a carpet-bagger."

"Isn't he a county man, Mr M'Callum," I asked. "Dougal More spoke of him as of Achnashlishaig."

"I'll tell you who he was," said Ballachantui. "He was born in Strathspey, where he made some money by smuggling with a still in the hills. Then he went to Glasgow, where he set up a speerit shop in Jamaica Street. Then he set up another in the Gallowgate, and so on, till he made a heap of money, and at last he bought yon bare place on the Crinan Canal. It's all rocks, but he put up a wall round it; and built a bit villa upon it, and sets up for a laird—he's of Achnashlishaig. You would hear, Mr Farquhar, about the Yankee met him on the road.

"I don't think I did," said Farquhar.

"Well, one tay when the steampoat people were coming across, M'Callum was at his gate, and a Yankee stopped and took a good look at the ground. 'Do you

pelong to this place?' says he to M'Callum. 'No, sir,' said M'Callum in a deegnified maner, 'this place pelongs to me.' 'Well, then,' said the Yankee, 'you're a poorer cuss than I thought you was, if you own this location.' M'Callum said no more."

"He will not make a great figure then as a legislator, this M'Callum?"

"Och, he'll do well enough maype," said Ballachantui. "He's the gift of the gab, and he'll speechify fine upon politics, and he can vote as well's another, but as for understanding it, he knows no more than Achy's poor wife up the glen—that's her that's so ill—knew apout farming. She cam from near London, a place called Waddon, and when she went into the byre she asked which of the cows gave the nice butter milk!"

"Then you seem to consider the advocate, on the whole, the likeliest man," I remarked.

"I'll no say that," replied Ballachantui. "He hes more polish nae doubt, but he is ferry high-minded, and fond of game laws and things of that kind. There's no much to choose between them."

"Well, here we are at Letter," said the squatter. "Come in, and we will argue the matter out at length."

We, however, declined Mr Farquhar's hospitable offer, and crossed the hill; nor was I able to induce my two friends to remain to cheer me in my solitude.

"Toon's wife," said Ballachantui, "hes become a home ruler, and he hes to keep early hours ye see."

"Speak for yourself, Ballachantui," said Toons.

## CHAPTER XX.

### ON THE MAOLACHY SHORE.

MR M'LEAN'S house is about a mile and a-half from the sea. A long triangular point stretches out into the Atlantic, and about the centre of the base of this triangle stands the house of Maolachy. Why a house should have been placed there, when there were so many eligible sites in the neighbourhood, it is difficult to say. It was in the centre of a low brown moor, utterly unsheltered, and had no view from it of the sea. Not a single tree grew near it, nor was there anything to break the force of the wind as it came raging up from the ocean. The house had probably been first a shepherd's cottage, then a farm-house, and finally, by the addition of wings, turned into a mansion-house. In front there was a square, enclosed by four high white stone walls, which represented the garden. Beyond the garden were one or two pasture and arable fields. Maolachy was a good, comfortable house; and though the outlook was cheerless the interior was bright and pleasant. There was a good library, a billiard-room, and a gun-room at the end of a long passage, used for smoking, and where, occasionally, far into the night, the fragrant

weed was consumed. All visitors at Maolachy will remember the jovialities of the gun-room.

The first person I met on nearing Maolachy was Mr Robert Taylor, who was slowly smoking his morning pipe along the road, apparently engaged in meditation.

"Dear me, Bob, you here!" I said. "We heard that all the parson power of the country was combined for your annihilation. Has no clerical bomb exploded yet at Reudle?"

"Yes, here I am. I couldn't resist coming to meet you—the friend of my youth—and have braved the terrors of the inquisition and the pains of excommunication all to gaze upon you. How are you, old boy?"

As we moved towards the house I asked him who were there, and if he had seen anything of Ted.

"Oh, the honourable gentleman is snug at Tostary. I hear he and the old boy spent the whole afternoon yesterday walking about inspecting the new drains. There is no doubt he expects Ted for a son-in-law."

"And what do you think of his expectation, Bob?"

"Blessed are they who have none," replied he, "they shall not be disappointed. That is an Oriental adage I would recommend strongly to old Tosty's notice. You'll find brave men and fair women here, at least, a fair woman. The brave men are Trant and the advocate. These braves haven't fought yet, though they have been pretty tolerably near it, and

the fair has plenty to do keeping them from tearing one another to pieces. If her sweetening influence was for a moment withdrawn Maolachy's drawing-room carpet would be strewn with fragments of human flesh, broadcloth, and shooting boots. Horrible, isn't it?"

"Very much so. What sort of fellow is the aqueduct, as Dougal calls him?"

"A fearful bore. He seems to look upon himself as having a sole vested interest in everything and everybody. If Maolachy speaks of wool, he has a vested interest in wool; if I speak of my black cattle, he has a vested interest in black cattle; if you speak of shipping, he has a vested interest in shipping; if another speaks of the Cannibal islands, he has a vested interest in the Cannibal islands. Nobody knows anything about anything but himself—an entirely self-contained gentleman. The only thing he hasn't a vested interest in is what is Celtic. He's been scoffing at the bodach of Glenbogary all the morning. I do hope he'll get a turn of the ghost's attentions before he goes to Parliament or the Parliament House."

"Isn't he a Celt himself?"

"Of course. He's as Highland as a peat; but he talks with a fine affected style of English, and pretends he doesn't know Gaelic. Ah, dear no! nothing so dreadful—Gaelic is vulgar. I really couldn't stand him, and came out here to smoke. He speaks as if

he were at a lecture table, with a tumbler of water and a manuscript before him. Old Maolachy even fizzes up at him sometimes, particularly when he talks anti-Celtic. I don't believe that marriage of his with Miss Bell will ever come off. I back Trant to win, and hope with all my heart he will."

Miss M'Lean met me at the door in her most Highland costume of rough homespun, with a cocked bonnet and sprig of heather, and talking in her most Highland manner. This was not the way to make herself agreeable to the man of the law I thought.

"It's me that's glad to see you, Mr Gunter. And was it to walk you did the whole way ? Peter will be bringing your portmanteau. It's tired you will be," said she. "This is my cousin Archy, the aqueduct, as they call him, from Edinburgh. We have no Lord Chancellor in Scotland ; if we had he would, of course, be one in time. Not having sufficient scope, therefore, in the law for his abeelities, it's to go into Parliament he wants, with a view to being premier of Great Britain and Ireland and all the colonies thereto belonging."

"I wish, really, Bell," said the advocate, bowing to me on this introduction, "you would drop that Highland way of speaking that you affect. It will become impossible for you to speak in any other way by-and-by. Its too ridiculous!"

Here old Maolachy came suddenly into the room, and the sharp rejoinder which was evidently about to

be made was suppressed, for Miss Bell was not without a slight temper of her own, and at times a cloud would come over her fair features, casting its trailing shadow like that which sometimes will flit across the sunlit surface of a mountain tarn. Old Maolachy was a tall thin man, with white military mutton-chop whiskers and moustache. He had been in the army in his youth, as his erect figure testified. When he spoke he looked quite fierce, and hurled his words at you in a peremptory manner, as if giving the command to a company of soldiers on a windy day.

"Ho! glad to see you, Mr Gunter. Not a bad day for the shore (this said in the tone of *Right about face*). Dougal More from Tostary here; capital fellow Dougal; knows all about seals. Mr Taylor and I going to see some black cattle—you and Trant will go to the shore—Archy going to canvas in the neighbourhood of Drissaig—Bell! get the sandwiches—Sandy! take out the two rifles in the gun-room—(The last sentences sounded like shoulder arms, present, fire!")

Dougal, Trant, Sandy, the keeper and myself now walked to the shore by a path that led down through the fields to a sandy beach on one side of the point. Here we sat down in the sunshine on a grassy bank, with the blue wave curling at our feet, to consider the plan of operations.

"It's too far in the waters is at the present time," said Dougal, "but they're beginning to go back, you'll

see yon rock off the point with just its nose above the sea? It's there the seals will come when it's more dry nor it is now. We will see them from here with the glass. When they get upon the rock, you must go back on to the high ground till you come to yon hole leading down to the sea. You will creep down that under cover to the water, and may pe you will get a seal and may pe no."

"I fancy," said Trant, "there are a good many about here?"

"No so many now," said Dougal, who, like all Highlanders, thinks the former times were better than these. "I've seen them long ago like sheep in a park, and as close together as herrings in a parrel. When I've been working at the peats at Tostary I've heard the noise of them splashing in the water. But Rona's the place for them."

"Where's Rona?" said Trant.

"It's an island away to the north where the seals has their headquarters—their depote, same as a regiment. I've seen a boat-load of them killed there with the club when they were young. There was one winter there we was glad to hev them."

"For oil, I suppose?" I said.

"No, but for eating. There was bad potatoes that year, and we were glad to get anything or do anything, but myself and another man had four parrels of seals, and would you pelieve me we got quite fat on them."

"I should think you would need plenty whiskey to wash it down," said Trant.

"Well, we had whiskey too, for I was working a wee still at the time on the hull, and if there was poison in the seals the whiskey killed it. They say it's a grand thing for killing poison. I'm told that a pint of whiskey will cure the effec of a pite of a sarpint. I often wonder if the pite of a sarpint would cure the effec of a pint of whiskey. May pe no. Though there's no so mony seals now there's some left yet here."

"I hope there will be two fewer before the evening." said Trant.

"I hope so too," said Dougal. "Do you know I whiles think that there's religion among them. They have a kirk of their own, whatever."

"They hev that," cut in Sandy. "The other Sabbath I was watching them with the glese from the shore, and there was an old seal got up on a rock for a poopit, and preached away to them as was pelow, just like Mr M'Kay at Drissaig—the ferry same."

"Hold on, Sandy! is no that one o' them making for the rock. Giv's the gleese. Ay! there's more nor one yonder. You'l see them bobbing apout like the buoy's that's on the herring-nets. In quarter of an hour there'll pe good few of them on the rock."

It was as Dougal said. First one of the black round heads came near, then another. They drew themselves out of the water, made for the sunniest

spots on the rock, and after a little frolic settled down for a siesta.

"Now shentlemen," said Dougal, "Sandy and I will pe working putting out this poat to pe ready if we need her. It will put them off their guard watching us, and you will make for yon hole-place. You will need to creep down it on your knees. When you are at the bottom you will see a black rock lying near the water's edge, like a boat turned upside down. You will make for that, and if you get there without being noticed, you will pe near the two that's on this side of the rock. Lucky the wind's off the shore."

We obeyed our mentor's instructions as well as we could. Dougal's hole-place was a fissure in the rock that sloped down to the shore. It was paved with jagged stones. It was by no means a pleasant path to crawl along, and our knees were sore enough when we got to the bottom. Opposite us and across our track was the black rock of which Dougal had spoken. It was fifty yards away, and the intervening space was slimy and soft. Over this we crawled digging our knees deep into the mud. At last we reached the rock. I cautiously peeped over, and there were our two phocas. I held up two fingers to Trant, and he winked knowingly. By means also of our digits we arranged that he was to take the right and I the left animal. The former was well up on the rock, the latter much nearer the water. Then up stole our rifles over the top of our cover. Slowly we took aim,

and then at a preconcerted signal we fired. When the smoke cleared away one seal we saw remaining motionless. It was the one I fired at. The other had vanished. Trant danced about like a maniac.

"I know I hit him. I'm sure he sunk close to the rock. Dougal! Dougal (shouting)! bring the boat, quick."

In much less time than I could have thought possible the two Highlandmen brought the boat, and we were rowed to the rock. My seal, a grisled fellow with a face like an old man, lay stone dead. The water was deeply tinged with blood below the spot where Trant's had lain.

"I told you I had hit him," cried he, exultingly, "and I'll have him yet."

"You'll pe clever if you get him now. Its ferry deep here, and it's at the pottom, he'll be holding on to the weed with his death grip. It's dead he is whatever."

While Dougal was talking, Trant began rapidly to put off his clothes, to go after his prey.

"Is it mad you are?" cried Dougal, "Mr Gunter! wont you take hold of him? Oh me, the day. He'll pe drounded, sure enough."

"Never fear, Dougal," said Trant, "I was too long among the natives on the Australian coast not to know how to dive; and have that seal I shall, or I'll know the reason why."

In a moment he was gone, but soon returned to the

surface, calling for a rope. There was one in the boat handed to him, and down he went again. In a few seconds he came up, and leapt in.

"You can haul away now lads," he said, "and you'll see what you will see."

A large plump seal was soon in the boat, and we were rowing back to the shore in great glee. When we landed, Dougal, after having had a dram, suggested that as it was but early in the day, we might try the otter cairn on the other side of the point.

"There's beasts there, whether they are at home or no. Sandy, you will, *laochan*,* go to the house, and take the rifles, and tell them to send down a cart for these beasts. Bring down Mr Gunter's gun, it will be at the house now, and another for Mr Trant, and meet us at the other side. It'll no take you half an hour."

"All right," said Sandy, and off he went.

While we walked across to the otter cairn, we held pleasant discourse together.

"Otters," said Dougal, "is ferry curious peasts. They will go far away in shore looking for fish. I've come on them between here and Loch Feeshinish, and killed them in the wather. I mind ae day coming along in the gloaming, and I heard something like a whistle; on looking down, what did I see, put a young otter right pelow me, and I put down my hand and gripped him by the pack of the neck, and carried him

* A term of endearment.

home like a puppy dog, and him trying to turn and pite me. My hand was sore for a year after with the strain of holding him ?"

"What did you do with him."

"Well, I sold him to a shentleman in Perthshire, who had him for a long time. Put there was a prince, or some great man, came the road, who wanted an otter hunt, so they sent the tame one down the river, and next day they went out with dogs and gillies, and men plowing horns, and killed the poor thing, and the great man was greatly pleased. I was hearing he wrote a pook with a fine story of the otter hunt."

"A great shame, and a great sham both," said Trant.

"Och, for shams, there's plenty of them. Who would pelieve yon head of hair Mrs Croker of Drumle wears was not 'the real M'Kay' ?"

"Isn't it?" said Trant, "I always thought so."

"Not it indeed; some person was speaking to her little girl apout her mother's peautiful hair, 'mine would pe just as bonny if I took the same care of it,' says she, 'mamma never sleeps in hers!' But otters can pe made as tame as dogs, shentlemen; there was a man near Inverness had one for a long time, and he used to work with it poth in the river and in the sea. Many's the salmon and cod he brought home."

"Are they easily trained ?" said I.

"No deeficulty whatever when you take them young you know. First they should get small fush and water, then pread and milk, then they should pe

taught to fetch and carry like a dog, with a piece of leather stuffed like a fish, then they will do after that. The one I'm speaking apout would play apout the house, and shump on its master's knee by the fire-side. It was a pleasant sight indeed. Here's the otter cairn, yon heap of loose stones. They'll pe often there. When Sandy comes with the dogs, we will see if any's at home. I'm sure yon wee skye tarrier of Mr M'Lean's will put them out if there's any."

After a long wait, Sandy made his appearance with the guns and two skye terriers, who snuffed about the shore, and round the cairn, and then made their way in through a hole.

"Look out, shentlemen, in case one comes out," cried Dougal.

He had scarcely spoken, when the dogs within began to yelp, and we were filled with expectation. No animal appeared for a long time, then I saw a long brown animal glide along the stones from the far away part of the cairn. Trant fired at him quickly, and killed him with one barrel. He also knocked over one I didn't see with the other. These were the only inhabitants of the cairn. The dogs came out, and we walked home. Trant leading the van with an elastic and triumphant step.

"He's a fine man him," said Dougal, pointing to him, "I like him well, put it's no my pairt to say anything against the aqueduct either. Oh, no."

"Only, you don't like him, Dougal?"

"Well, to tell you God's truth, I do not. He's too fine a shentleman for me. You'd maype hear of what Lachy, yon foolish lad goes apout the country, said to him one day at the shooting? It made great noise at the time; put you was not in this country then."

"No, I never heard it."

"Well, he gave a dram out of his flask to Lachy on the hull. 'Here, Lachy,' says he, 'tell the biggest lie you ever told now.' 'Deed, sir,' says Lachy, 'it's yourself's the perfect gentleman.' Miss M'Lean herself got hold of the story and made a great fun of it. The servants was telling me that for a long time she called him nothing put the parfect shentleman. He! he, he," cackled Dougal.

The "perfect shentleman" and Maolachy were standing at the door when we reached the house, with Bob and Dr M'Audle the minister near them on the gravel.

"I'm glad to see, Doctor," I said, "that you still entertain friendly feelings towards the dignitary of the Roman church."

"Deed, Mr Gunter, we're that dull here that we're glad to get a laugh any way, and when we can't get anybody to laugh at, we are glad to get somebody to laugh at us. When I read the account of the affair in the *Oban Times* I simply roared. It will be a long time I'm afraid before we have such a lively presbytery again. What are you going to do with the beautiful skins of these otters, Mr Trant?"

"I was going to offer them in the humblest manner to Miss M'Lean," said Trant, "if she will deign to accept of them. They may make a muff or something."

"Many, *many* thanks," said Miss Bell, who came up to and looked out of the open window of the drawing-room. "I accept them with pleasure; they are beautiful; and whenever I wear them it's to think tenderly of the Australian and New Zealand Mutton and Beef Company (Limited) I will."

The advocate looked darkly at her, and with a scowl strode away into the house.

"Archy, I think, isn't in very good humour to-day," said the young lady smiling. "It's tired he will be after his canvass. It's about Drissaig he was the whole day, and not much for it."

Certainly good humour was not conspicuous in the learned gentleman that evening. During dinner he was silent, hardly vouchsafing a word to anyone at the table. After dinner, when the conversation, as it frequently does in West Highland houses, turned upon Celtic customs and literature, he became bitterly satirical, after a fashion.

"They are actually going to have a chair for Gaelic in our University, to perpetuate a most barbarous and useless language. Whenever you see the word Solomon in it you may be sure it is pronounced Nebuchadnezar."

"Of course, being a highlander yourself," said the minister, "you subscribed to the Gaelic chair?"

"I certainly did nothing of the kind," replied he, "I look upon bagpipes, Gaelic, kilts, pipers, and all the rest of the thing as a perfect nuisance."

"Being highland through and through to your very backbone, I hope you look upon yourself in the same light," said Maolachy.

"Very good," muttered Trant.

"And pray, sir," said the advocate, turning fiercely to him, "what do you think so *very good?*"

"No, no," said the laird, interfering, "don't answer him, Mr Trant; there is an old Gaelic proverb—

> 'The lawyer's house, as I've heard said,
> Is built on fool or madman's head.'

Don't you be one of the foundation-stones. I'm afraid, Archy, you didn't get on well to-day in your canvass?"

"I think the advocate made a very good impression at Drissaig," said the minister, who was a Tory of Tories.

This pleased the petted man of law, and we went into the drawing-room, where the two rivals glared at one another, at times ferociously. Miss M'Lean, woman like, seemed at once to understand the situation, and addressed herself to smoothing the ruffled plumage of her cousin.

"Now, Archy," said she, going up to him, "do you know I've heard your visit to Drissaig was much appreciated? Duncan M'Master's wife was over with some eggs, and she says you quite won all their hearts."

The brow of the advocate cleared wonderfully after this, and when Miss M'Lean sung at the piano, he stood over her with his most "vested interest" expression.

"Archy, you'll be nice," said she, as she rose from the piano; "we are going to have a pic-nic to-morrow to Eilan Horsa, and Kate M'Lucas and the Frackersaig girls, and Mr O'Hagan are coming, and you must come."

"My dear Bell, I'm going to Tomindoun to-morrow to meet M'Martin the agent; he's coming by the five o'clock boat, and I've heaps to do."

"Oh Archy, do be good now! We will be back in good time, and you can write M'Martin to wait till you'll come. Now that's settled. You really are a nice fellow when you like."

How much reality there was in Miss Bell's encomium I don't know. At anyrate she gained her point. We were to have the advocate's company next day to Eilan Horsa.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### EILAN HORSA.

EILAN HORSA is a small green island, separated from the main land by a very narrow but deep sound, through which, in stormy weather, the tides flow, racing and roaring, lifting the billows high and whitening their crests with foam. The island is uninhabited, and used only for the pasturage of sheep. It lies right at the entry of an inland loch like a huge sea monster. The head, looking seawards, rises bold, defiant, and precipitous. The other extremity is low down in the water, with shelving beach of yellow sand, against which the waves break gently. On either side of the island there is a strong tidal stream ever running.

It is a pleasant place for a pic-nic on a summer's day. The green sward is soft under foot, and marked with fairy rings. There is a cave that can be explored with candles, from the roof of which white alabaster stalactites hang, and the floor of which is the deep blue sea. The visitor who would penetrate its interior has to creep along a narrow pathway running along its side. On the elevated part of the island there is a small ruined chapel, not larger than

the room of a cottage, and the walls of a still smaller dwelling-place close by. They are evidently the cell and oratory of some recluse in a far away time. Through the window next the sea you look sheer down the precipice, at the edge of which the building lies. The glow of the hermit's fire must have been seen far away by vessels in the darkness, and may have served them as a guiding light. The interior of the chapel is paved with gravestones, most of which are nameless. Kilted effigies are engraved on some of them, girt with swords, surrounded with figures of dogs and animals representing the chase. There is also the flat gravestone of an abbot, with encised Celtic cross and ornaments—possibly one of the Iona brotherhood, who may have chosen to lie here rather than in the abbey where he closed his days. In the corner is a nameless monument probably of some old northern rover. On it is carved a galley with long oars and in full sail, crowded with armed men. Tradition says this is the grave of Horsa, the old Scandinavian vi-king, who on this island closed his predatory career. In no more suitable spot could he lie; and if ever he visits the glimpses of the moon he can stand on his grave and look right out to the Atlantic and across the wild waves with an unbroken view towards his native Scandinavia.

A happy party walked down from Maolachy to the shore. They were preceded by a cart containing hampers and all necessaries for the pic-nic. Before

it strode M'Lean himself, walking erect, with a long staff in his hand, and with the military air of the bandmaster of a regiment. The party consisted of Miss M'Lean, Miss M'Lucas, and Miss Jane Frackersaig, Ted, Bob, the Advocate, Trant, and myself. The sun shone brightly, and everybody was in the best possible of humours. The cloud of the past night had passed away from the brow of the Advocate, and he was affable in the highest degree. He was dressed in a light tweed costume, and wore a white hat, and generally had the air of a member of Parliament relaxing himself after severe senatorial duties. Even towards Trant he was amiable, and spoke as if he had a vested interest in the Australian Company.

"It is generally well thought of in the Parliament House. Terrier was speaking about it the other day at the fire-place. He had a very good opinion of it. Sharp fellow Terrier. Know him of course?"

"I haven't the pleasure," said Trant.

"Capital man. Can go right through you like a gimlet; turn you inside out in a minute."

"The Lord save us," ejaculated Bob, "from Terrier if he can do that!"

"He's about the best man we have, I assure you. I was his junior in a case lately. There was M'Ossian and Hashim, and all our tip-top men in it. Lord Paddle, in the Outer House, pronounced an interlocutor, very able in its way. Singularly clear-headed

man, Lord Paddle. But I think I was talking, Trant, about your Company. I think, now, you mean well."

"Thank you, I'm very much obliged to you," said Trant.

"Well, I think you do, and you may largely benefit the working classes. I think, you know, that Government might subsidise such undertakings as yours. They clearly benefit the bone and sinew of our labouring population. 'Ill fares the land,' you know, 'to hastening ills a prey, where men degenerate and' —I forget the rest of it, but it clearly points to—— '

"This!" cried Maolachy, in the tone of a commanding officer, as the cart stopped, "that you must give up prosing, Archy. Take this hamper. Trant, lift these cloaks. Here's the boat. Dougal, back her into the pier. Take care of the ladies. Right about face!"

Our voyage was made in a little steam yawl belonging to M'Lucas. The centre part was occupied by the engine and funnel. In the bow there was just room for two sailors. The stern was seated for five or six. There was no cabin—little room of any kind, and the well-filled hampers were in a precarious position against the funnel. The little vessel, in calm weather, could go swiftly along, wheezing through its high-pressure engine like a broken-winded horse. There was scarcely a ripple to-day on the water, so we made good progress, keeping close along shore, below Tostary Castle. Trant and the Advocate

maintained a constant fusilade at the black scarts that sat sentinel-like on the outlying rocks, and the blue pigeons that darted from the caves. We were all very happy, singing songs, English, French, Gaelic, and when the ladies, who were the only members of the party able to perform in the latter language, ceased, old Dougald and Sandy, the Maolachy keeper, and a grizzly old bear who worked the engine, were always ready to take up the melody.

"I don't think," said Maolachy, shouting as if it was a tornado, "there are any songs in the world to beat the Gaelic. Sing, Dougald, the one on the Island of Mull, that Donald Macphail wrote."

"Deed, Maolachy, I do not like to sing English, put I heve some verses of it in that language that Blackie put out. He's a ferry clever man."

"O, the Island of Mull is an Isle of delight,
With the wave on the shore and the sun on the height;
With the breeze on the hills, and the blast on the bens,
And the old green woods, and the old grassy glens.

"There was health in thy breeze, and the breath of thy bowers
Was fragrant and fresh 'neath the light summer showers,
When I wandered a boy, unencumbered and free,
At the base of the Ben, 'neath the old holly tree.
O! the Island, &c.

"When the lussa was swirling in deep rocky bed,
When the white-bellied salmon, with spots of the red
And veins of dark blue, in young lustihood strong
Was darting, and leaping, and frisking along.
O! the Island, &c.

"And the red hen was there, 'neath the wood's leafy pride,
And the cock he was crooning and cooing beside;
And though forest or fence there was none in the Ben,
The red deer were trooping far up in the glen.
O! the Island, &c.

"Bright joys of my youth, ye are gone like a dream,
Like a bubble that bursts on the brow of the stream;
But my blessing, fair Mull, shall be constant with thee,
And thy green-mantled bens, with their roots in the sea.
O! the Island, &c."

The bard was recompensed with a bumper of whiskey by Mr M'Lean, who handed it to him in a tone as if he was ordering him to swallow a cup of poison. It was taken from him with apparent reluctance, but its contents at once disappeared.

"Ay, Mr M'Lean, it's too leebral you are with it. You'll pe thinking I have as large a capacity as Angus the minister's man, who was ferry fond of arguing with his master upon doctrines and sermons, and the like of that. 'I always carry my pint,' says he, 'doctor!' 'Deed, Angus,' says his master, 'you shenerally can carry three.' He's a ferry funny man the doctor. My priest, Mr Chisholm, is greatly taken up with him. Which side of the island, Maolachy are you going to take her round?"

This was addressed to M'Lean, who was at the helm. We had now come in sight of Horsa, and it was open to us to take the passage on either side.

"I suppose both sides are safe, Dougal?"

"Hoch aye! There's deep water on both sides, but

there's a long way and a short way, as Lachy said to the Englishman. Keep her well off, Mr M'Lean, from the shore."

"What did Lachy say to the Englishman?" said Miss M'Lucas, who had been very quiet, occupied chiefly with some knitting.

"Oh, Miss! it's an Englishman was meeting Lachy on the road. 'How far is it,' says he, 'to Clacgugary?' 'Well,' says Lachy, 'there is a long way and a short way. If you keep the direction you're going on at present it's twenty-four thousand miles, but if you go the other way it's apout two and a half!'"

When we got to the south side of the island, and opposite the yellow beach, the little dingey we had been towing astern was brought to the side of the launch, and we were landed in her two at a time, Sandy pulling us to the shore. We wandered hither and thither over the soft green sward, explored the hermitage, and even ventured into the cave, Dougal leading the way with a lanthorn. Ted kept close to Miss M'Lucas. Though Bob and she were apparently good friends they seemed under restraint. But few words passed between them. Miss M'Lean walked between the advocate and the Australian, keeping up a constant rattle, and amusing herself at the expense of each. Now it was some nonsense about the Beef company—now some fun about the coming election. Then came the pic-nic in a little green dell running down to the sea. Everybody was busy. Fire was

kindled, potatoes were boiled, bottles uncorked, and general hilarity prevailed. Of course the advocate had a vested interest in Eilan Horsa, and lectured long on its antiquarian and other associations. He knew all about the old Viking, and where he came from, and what was said about him in the Eddas. Was not he, the advocate, a Fellow of the Edinburgh Archæological Society? Who then had so much right to know about Horsa? Dr Cockle, who was a distinguished friend of his and a member of the society, had visited Horsa. He had actually discovered runes in the eastern cave. Professor M'Egg had told him himself.

"Gad!" said Maolachy breaking in upon the learned gentleman's discourse, "Archy thinks he's already in Parliament. Don't you all pity the Speaker? 'Pon my word, Archy, there are bores enough up there without you adding to the number."

"Is it to damp his political ardour you would do?" said his daughter. "It's on the Treasury Bench he will be soon. It's tickets you'll get for me in the Ladies' Gallery, won't you, Archie?"

So conversation flowed on till the sun began to decline, and M'Lean, in his usual loud tones of command, gave the order for departure. When we got down to the place where we landed we found a heavy sea running. There was not much wind, but the strong flood tide caused the waves to rise. One after another of the party were carried safely out to the

launch in the little boat, and only Miss M'Lean and Trant remained. They had been collecting the paraphernalia of the feast, and were thus behind the rest. The lady stepped into the boat, and old Dougal pulled off.

"Take care, Dougal," shouted Maolachy from the vessel. "Keep her head well up, and I'll throw you a rope."

"No fear, sir," was Dougal's reply.

There was good cause for alarm, however. When about half way between the shore and the launch a great sea came rolling along, and suddenly the little boat was capsized, and the lady and boatman in the water. There was little fear for the latter, who was quite amphibious and struck out for the boat, but Miss M'Lean, though able to swim a little and keep afloat, was carried hopelessly about in the heavy sea. There was confusion among us all. The launch was turned shorewards, and the advocate seized a rope, but before anything could be done in the way of rescue, Trant darted out from the shore, and in a moment seized the young lady and, holding her in the water as only an experienced swimmer could do, struck out for us. Both were soon safe on board, neither the worse for the ducking.

"Was it to wet yourself in the water you did for me, Mr Trant?" said Miss M'Lean, who showed the pluck of a true Highland girl. "What would have come to the Beef and Mutton Company (Limited) if you had gone down there?"

"Lassie! lassie!" said Maolachy with deep feeling, "be quiet. God bless you, Trant, you are a brave fellow."

"Deed, Maolachy," said Dougal, apparently not the least ashamed of having looked ignobly after his own safety, "that's what he is, a brave fellow indeed, and he would not be the worse of a dram after that ducking that he got; nor Miss M'Lean herself, nor me too. It's the pest thing a dram when you are wet or the like of that."

"Yes," said Maolachy, "a dram's all very well; but we can't have you two here in wet clothes. What's to be done?"

"Och," said Dougal, "we'll run over in five minutes and less to Balmaglaskie, yon white house on the other side; and it's dry clothes and every comfort they will get there, and a drop of good thing, no to say but you have it here too Maolachy."

"We will do that," replied M'Lean. "I will go ashore with you, Bell and Trant. You can get dry things from the good people at the house, and they will send us across in their dogcart to Maolachy. We will be there before you who keep by the boat. What are you to do, Dougal, you are as wet as anyone?"

"Is it me, Maolachy? I'm sure you know that I am as well on the water as on the land. It's only in the inside I do not like to be dry, like John the cobbler."

"We'll keep you all right in that respect," said

Maolachy, giving him the cordial he loved; "but what of John the cobbler?"

"Och, it's one wet day down at Drissaig he wanted to get the loan of a watering-proof from the innkeeper. 'Take a red herring,' says the innkeeper, 'it will keep you drier nor a coat the whole day.' 'Thank you,' says John, 'it's the wrong side you'll pe keeping dry."

We picked up the little boat, landed M'Lean, his daughter, and Trant safely, and pursued our way home. It was rather a dull voyage, and we were all somewhat dispirited. The advocate was particularly in a low key, and appeared to have no vested interest in anything. He was silent all the way back; perhaps he was jealous of the Australian's prowess; perhaps he was meditating upon the address to the electors which he and his agent, he told us, had to concoct that evening at Tomindoun. The cause of his depression was probably the former, for the address was written in Edinburgh for him, and was at that moment safe in the pocket of M'Martin, who was growling at Tomindoun over his client's delay.

"It's ferry quiet the advocate is," said Dougal, who had the helm, to Miss M'Lucas. "I'm thinking it's making his speech he'll pe."

"He is so quiet, Dougal," replied Miss M'Lucas, laughing, "that I'm not going any further with him, and you must put me ashore at Tostary. Davie Boyle will come out for me in his boat."

The old fisherman was already waiting for us opposite Tostary, and his mistress and the Frackersaig young lady, accompanied by Ted, departed under his care. In a short time afterwards we reached our landing place and made our way to the house, where we were delighted to find our friends before us.

"Here we are," shouted old M'Lean, quite jubilant. "Got dry clothes—cup of tea at Balmaglaskie—excellent entertainment—unbounded hospitality—dog-cart yoked for us—smart-trotting pony—home in good time—mess will be ready in two minutes—sharp's the word!"

We were all standing in the drawing-room waiting for dinner being announced, for dinner was early at Maolachy, and talking over the day's adventures, when a boy on horseback passed the window.

"That's the telegraph boy from the post-office at Tomindoun," said M'Lean. "Message for you, Archy—affairs of state—Russia advanced to Merve—Cape Town bombarded by the Chinese—Government defeated. Hey?"

"Message, sir, for Mr Trant," said the servant, bringing in the telegram.

Trant opened it, read it, and quietly put it in his pocket.

"What time does the *Clansman* get to Tomindoun this evening on her way south?" he asked.

"At seven o'clock," said M'Lean. "It's now exactly six, surely you arn't going to leave us."

Miss M'Lean suddenly rose from the sofa where she had been sitting, and crossing the room to Trant, laid her hand on his arm.

"Tell me, Mr Trant, have you had bad news? I fear you have. *Must* you go?"

"Oh, it's nothing at all, Miss M'Lean," said Trant; but his anxious look rather belied his words. "It's a little business matter. I must be in London some time to-morrow by hook or crook."

"Well, then," said she, "I'll have the wagonette and the two ponies brought round. Archy has to go at anyrate to meet his agent, and you'll be in good time for the boat if you drive smartly. Of course you can't wait dinner, but I'll have some sandwiches put in for you."

The advocate, who was not above a vested interest in his dinner, apparently didn't relish going without it, though he was long overdue at Tomindoun, where M'Martin was passing the time objurgating his delay and drinking whisky-toddy at his expense. He had, however, to make the best of it, and he and Trant departed together. As Miss M'Lean shook hands with the latter, I heard her say feelingly—

"I don't suppose, Mr Trant, you care about it, but I want you to know how grateful I am to you, and one person will be sad if there is anything in this business that takes you away from us to vex you."

"God bless you," was all that poor Trant could

say, as he stepped into the wagonette, and was driven away in company with the advocate.

We had a dull dinner party. Miss M'Lean said little, and, pleading a headache, retired early. Bob said he would walk to Reudle by Glenbogary. He really wished to meet the bodach. I thought also I might as well walk over to Drissaig, and hire from there to Stronbuy.

"You're as bad as Archy, defying the powers of the other world," said M'Lean to Bob. "You are all leaving me like rats from a sinking ship."

"I wonder," said Bob, as we walked along together in the moonlight to where our roads parted, "what took Trant off in that mighty hurry. You'll find this drowning business will bring things right between Miss Bell and him. It always does in novels. I shan't give you much for the advocate's chance with Miss Bell. Will you take me?"

I wouldn't bet with him on the matter, for I was of the same opinion as himself. Neither did I tell him what was in the telegram which Trant showed me in his room as I helped him to pack up his things. It didn't say much, but what it did say was ominous. It was as follows:—

"*Publius Park, Tavistock Hotel, London.*

"To C. Trant, Drissaig, near Tomindoun.

"Come at once—bad news from Suez—Bowker missing."

Now, Bowker was the acting manager in London for the Australian and New Zealand Meat Company.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE ELECTION.

FOR more than a fortnight after the events chronicled in the last chapter, I felt as one might do if he could find himself in the heart of a cyclone. The whole country side around us was in a state of political excitement. Stronbuy was in the central place of endless agitation. I was mostly alone. Ted had caught the political fever, and I saw almost nothing of him. He came out as a Tory partisan, and he and old M'Lucas stumped the country together. I got one day that most excellent paper, the *Oban Times*, with an account of a meeting of Mr M'Callum's supporters at Tomindoun, at which Ted had intruded himself, and insisted on moving an amendment. Mr M'Kay, who was in the chair, had refused to allow him to do so, on the just ground of his being a non-elector. Ted had been persistent. There was an attempt made to eject him. A free fight ensued, and the meeting broke up in confusion. Then Bob Taylor came out as an advanced radical and enthusiastic supporter of Mr M'Callum. He addressed a meeting at Drissaig on the land laws, and his audience were so overjoyed by the hope of getting

their respective patches of land without having any rent to pay that they continued in a drunken and bemuddled state for days afterwards. The factor was seldom at home. He had to attend meetings in various parts of the country. Apparently he could not make up his mind on which side to throw his influence, so he went to the meetings of both candidates, and generally returned home considerably disguised in drink. I had visits from both candidates, who came up to see him, and to both of whom he apparently gave promise of support. Then their agents appeared one after the other, and in the discharge of the duties of hospitality, I had to give bed and entertainment for a night to M'Sporran. He was certain of the success of his client, who would be sure to secure my advancement in the branch of the public service to which I belonged. He promised me faithfully that it should be so if I would keep the factor straight. It was altogether a mighty political tornado.

I fished steadily on, feeling, or rather trying to feel, little interest in a contest with which I had no business, and wishing to be in peace and quietness. Dougal met me day by day faithfully at Loch Feeshinish, and from him I chiefly gleaned intelligence of what was going on around me.

One day he brought news of a fierce quarrel between my neighbours Ballachantui and Toons. They had espoused different sides, and had thrown themselves into the contest with Celtic fervour.

"You'd pe hearing of the meeting they had at Drissaig last night," said Dougal. "I went over for a while after putting up the poat. It was an awful row."

"What happened, Dougal?"

"Well, your own friends, Ballachantui and Toons, had a tarrible cast out. Bally is ferry strong for M'Callum, and he told Toons that he was nothing but a lick-spittle of the laird. It was to fight they were going to do when the polishman cam petween them."

"What is your own opinion of the candidates, Dougal?"

"Och, ferry poor opinion. The lies they tell is awful. They're just as bad as Kirsty Ruadh at Luriginish. 'You never catch a lie coming out of my mouth,' says she to a man one day. 'Deed,' says he, 'that's true, they fly so fast you can't catch them.' You'd think M'Callum is to put everything right in the country that's wrong, and that's plenty, God knows; and then when you hear the aqueduct he has a medicine that will cure everything that gives trouble to everybody. I was saying to Sandy from Maolachy, when we was hearing him the other night, that he was not one bit better nor the travelling doctor was at Drissaig with his pill. 'Whereabouts,' says one to him, 'is the liver?' 'Oh,' says he, 'whatever part of the body it is in my pill will find it out.' It's a wonder to me that there is any British

constitution left, there's so many doctors working upon it."

"It is very strange, indeed, Dougal, and surprises wiser people even than you."

"And did you hear of the trick that Frackersaig's son played, sir, the other day?"

"Not I, Dougal. I'm clean out of the hubbub, but what was it?"

"Och, Frackersaig went to canvas for the aqueduct on the other side of the country, and what does his son, who is a leebral, do, but he pastes on the back of the dogcart a big bill with 'Vote for M'Callum' on it. Frackersaig drove all round every place with it. There was fine sport apout it."

Another day Dougal met me at the head of the loch, evidently brim full of intelligence, and I hadn't begun well to cast when he asked me if I had heard the news of the *aqueduct*.

"I hear nothing, Dougal, but what I hear from you?"

"Well, you know, the aqueduct wears a white hat always, but he appeared the other day at a meeting at Crogan without it, though his face was white enough. The poys was crying after him upon the street, 'Where's the hat?'"

"What happened to his tile?"

"Well, do you know, he was riding down Glenbogary when the bodach appeared to him and knocked off his hat with a long stick. They found it

next day in the river, near Davie Boyle's, with the bottom knocked out of it."

"That didn't look like the work of a spirit, Dougal?"

"Oh, speerits is ferry clever. It was in a terrible fear the aqueduct was when he reached Tostary. They're saying Tolmie, the drover, hes gone over to the Tories this 'lection."

"What sent him over?"

"Oh, it's just offence he took at Mr Croker, Drumle. You know, he likes a dram, and he was coming riding into Tomindoun one day on his pony, and passing the hotel of M'Callum's committee, where Croker was standing with a lot of shentlemen around him. 'Warm day, Mr Tolmie,' says Croker, 'would you take something?' 'Don't care if I do,' says Tolmie, throwing himself off his pony. 'Well then,' says Croker, 'let us take a walk.' The people all was near dead with the laughing, but Tolmie was ferry angry, and it's to vote for the aqueduct he's going to do now."

Such little scraps of information as these floated into my seclusion from time to time, indicative of what was going on in the great world around me. On Sunday, when I went to hear Dr M'Audle, I found that even the day of rest was not kept free from the intrusion of politics. The doctor preached a sermon, evidently one of his grandfather's, upon slander and backbiting, and had in it touches which were given

with special emphasis, and supposed to have reference to what was going on out-of-doors. The sermon had probably been written fifty years before, but that did not matter—one passage in it, indeed, referring to the habit of painting indulged in by the female sex, bore evidence to its antiquity. 'It is less sinful,' said the doctor, 'to redden one's own complexion than to blacken your neighbour's.' The doctor was a keen Conservative, and this and similar allusions were taken, in the heated state of feeling, by the opposite side as aimed at them. The discussion in the churchyard afterwards was very animated. Maolachy, who differed, as I have said, from his nephew's political views, being keen for having the minister reported to the presbytery. On the other hand, Mr Farquhar, Letter, couldn't approve of the sermon too highly. It was most "seasonable." From the squatter, as I walked home, I learnt what were the prospects of the respective candidates.

"Both sides allow," said he, "that it all depends upon Crogan."

"Who," said I, "is Crogan?"

"It is not a *who* at all," said Farquhar, laughing, "it is a small fishing village on the west coast. There are a number of voters there, and they virtually hold the result in their hands—or rather one of them does, for there is a fellow there who is called the 'King of Crogan,' and him they obey. I wish it was all over. I don't believe there will be a sober

man or a bottle of whisky left in the country by the time it is done."

Next day on the loch I asked Dougal for information about Crogan, and found that Mr Farquhar was correct in his supposition.

"Ay, it's Crogan's men hes the election truly, and Donald *Ruadh* (that's red Donald) is at the head of them, and they will all do what he tells them."

"I fancy they have plenty attention paid them at the present time?"

"Och ay. I hear that M'Callum and the aqueduct are never out of the place. Donald Ruadh won't tell what side he's on, put Peggy his wife, a man told me, has been telling the aqueduct that he's sure to be with the servatives."

"That's rather treacherous of Peggy isn't it."

"Och, they're as pad as the telegraph the women are for letting people ken things. When they was putting up the wires at Grass Point opposite Oban, Lachy said to the engineer, 'What's the good of all that work when there's plenty women in this country?' 'How that, Lachy?' says he. 'Couldn't you put a woman at every three miles,' says he, 'and give the message to the first one in a secret?' It was ferry clever of Lachy."

"But what is it induces the Crogan people to support the advocate?"

"I don't know, but this is what I heard. You know M'Callum is a great man for sailing boats, and

he was at a rekatta, and he wouldn't allow the Crogan people to go into the race because of some particular sail they had. They were awfully angry with him at the time. I mind well."

"Have you been at Tostary lately, Dougal?"

"Not much inteed, nor at Maolachy but ferry seldom. They're saying that Miss Bell is no greatly taken up at all with her cousin's candatoor. I'm thinking yon Stralian man picking her out of the waters has done for him."

"If the advocate succeeds, and is an M.P., don't you think that will put matters straight?"

"Well, maype; there's no doubt it may help. It's a fine thing to succeed, as you say, and if poor Mr Trant loses his money, as I heard tell he will, I wouldn't give much for his chance."

"You wouldn't, Dougal; you are not a believer in feminine constancy?"

"Well, there was a lass over at Stigarstra was to be married to Rob M'Gilvray over at Reispool, and when he lost everything he had the year of the Glasgow Bank, she threw him overboard just same as I would spit in the loch, and took up with an old man Donald Gollan, a meeserable creature with one leg, but one thousand pounds."

"Very shabby treatment, Dougal."

"Ay, when Rob went to see her after the bank failed she was ferry cold to him inteed. 'Take a chair,' says she. 'I think I will,' says he. So he

took one of the parlour chairs in his hand and walked home with it along the road. Many's the time I seed it in his house myself."

As the day of the election approached, the excitement grew to white heat, and on the day before the poll both candidates addressed the Croganites at length. Mr M'Callum was particularly persuasive, and promised unbounded attention to their fishing interest. There must be greater facilities afforded for developing this noble branch of industry. He certainly should support a proposal to pension the widows and families of such of his hardy friends—the toilers of the sea, whom he saw before him—who might be prematurely consigned to a watery grave This was thought to have produced a fine effect. Afterwards a few questions were put to the candidate regarding the church question, and answered in an ambiguous manner, when the king of Crogan, who probably thought he had got as much out of both candidates as he was likely to get, rose to declare himself. His words were few, but they were considered by all who heard him sufficiently decisive.

"Churches here, or churches there," said the King, "I'll no vote, and there's no a man in Crogan will vote for a man who says a spinnaker is no a racing sail."

After this there was but little to be said or done, and the laird of Achnashlishaig felt he was fighting a losing battle. He died game, however, and went to

the poll like a man. When the Polling Sheriff announced the result, the number stood thus,

M'Lean, - 8000.
M'Callum, - 7990.

The Croganites had won the day for their candidate. I knew the result very soon by the bonfires that crowned all the heights around me on the evening of the victory, and from the hill above Stronbuy could make out the manse illuminated in every window.

"Well, factor," said I, two days after, when that worthy had got sufficiently sobered, "and who did you vote for after all?"

"Well, you know, sir," said he, with a somewhat humorous leer, "both shentlemans was so kind to me that I couldn't make up my mind to vote for either of them, so I voted for them both! You would hear what Achashlishaig said on the day of the voting after he was peat."

"No; what was it?"

"A man from Drissaig asked at him how he was feeling. 'Like Lazarus,' says he. 'How that?' says the man. 'Lazarus was licked by the dogs and so am I.' He's a ferry fine man, M'Callum. I got the promise of a post for my poy in the Customs from him."

"He can't do much for him now," I ventured to say.

"Oh, put the aqueduct promised too, so I'm think ing that I'm all right. I'm going to send the poy to the ccemetary at Oban to get ready for the post."

"The seminary you mean," I said.

"Ay, maype; put is it not shust the same?"

I was more interested in the fortunes of Trant than in those of any one else, and was glad to get a hurried note from him. He found things very bad indeed, but was keeping it as quiet as he could. The shares of the company had gone down, as I would see. He and Mr Park were hard at work, and he would not despair of pulling the concern through. Park was a good business man, and a great help. Perhaps I had better say nothing to Mr M'Lucas of matters. If they went to the bad he would hear it soon enough.

The day I received this note, Mr Ted made his appearance in a most exuberant state of delight.

"I've had such delicious fun driving about with old M'Lucky. Feel sorry I didn't stand myself. Bob you know is out of the running now."

"I'm sorry to hear it," I said, "you would have been much better employed fishing with me and listening to old Dougal."

"Now, old cock, draw it mild. I mean you to share in my good fortune. You're to come over to Tostary to-morrow—old M'Lucky insists upon it."

"I'm not going to do anything of the kind. You know our holiday is nearly at an end, and I'm not going to waste one of my precious days. They're like the last tickets in a lottery—the most prized."

"Now, my dear boy, Miss M'Lucas wants you specially to come, and Donald, the keeper, tells me

that he is keeping the west side of the march for you. The black game are as thick as crows out there; and, look here, there's been a big stag in the woods above the Glenbogary Fall. He was down at the corn stooks with two hinds two nights ago—so you'll come all right."

Whether it was Miss M'Lucas's special invitation, or the black cock or the big stag that weighed with me I do not know, but I finally agreed to return with Ted to Tostary.

"It will be but civil after all to say good-bye."

"You're a brick," replied Ted, "it will, and we shall see the bodach of Glenbogary once more, and hunt the bounding roe and drag the salmon from his slimy pool, and do a thousand and one things, and when you go back to Babylon your last visit to Tostary will be a joy for ever."

I little knew when I promised what was in store for me.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### LOVE WILL FIND A WAY.

MR TED'S promise of sport at Tostary was, in some measure at least, fulfilled. The black-game were numerous, lying among the bracken at the edge of the cornfields, and sunning themselves on the green knolls, where it took all our skill to get at them. Of the stag, however, I saw nothing, and though the wood above the Bogary Falls was carefully beaten, it produced nothing but a couple of roe deer.

M'Lucas was not in a very amiable mood. The excitement of the election had been rather too much for him, and he had a good bill to pay as his share of the candidate's expenses, over which he made many wry faces. He was disgusted also about his London company. Altogether his temper was most atrocious, and old Mrs M'Tavish and his niece had anything but a pleasant time. There was one thing alone seemed to give him satisfaction, and that was the position of affairs between Ted and the latter.

"It's all right," he whispered to me in the drawing-room on the day of my arrival, "and a fine fellow he is. It's he that should pe in Parliament and not that

man with the white hat. He and his white hat have cost me more than enough I can tell you."

"There has been no engagement yet, sir," I ventured to remark. "These things don't always go as one wishes them."

"Oh, it's all right," he answered. "I was speaking to her apout it, and telling her it must pe ferry soon, and she didn't say nothing against it. It's a mercy for her she escaped that radical rascal at Reudle."

"My dear sir! really that's too strong."

"You heard what he did at the presbytery and at the election time. No but the meenisters deserved it all. They are aye after siller *them*. There's M'Audle wanting an augmentation, but I am not to pe imposed upon any more than them as was pefore me."

I had now spent the two days I intended to remain at Tostary, and announced my intention on the evening of the second of getting back on the morrow to Stronbuy, preparatory to going south. Old M'Lucas was very irritable. He had a quarrel with his head shepherd, a most valuable man, and had given him warning to leave. Everything was wrong. He found fault with his dinner, and snapped viciously at poor old Miss M'Tavish.

"Couldn't she get a decent cook. God knows they cost enough. It wasn't a fit dinner for any Christian to eat. Did she want to poison him?"

Miss M'Lucas was very quiet all the evening. She excused herself from singing—an unusual thing with

her—and retired early from the drawing-room. After she went I saw no great object in remaining to hear old Tostary's growls, and withdrew also. Ted said he was going down to Davie Boyle's. The *Dunara Castle* was to call on her way from Barra about twelve, and he thought he would like to see her come in. I was awakened soon after I went to bed by the distant noise of the steamboat, and looking out of my window saw her three lights emerging slowly out of the darkness. Then there were some swift turns of the screw, followed by the roar of the escaping steam. I could just discern the black outline of the vessel as she lay immediately below the house. In a few minutes I saw a light shoot out from the shore near Davie Boyle's. I knew it was his boat. Then in a few moments the roar ceased, the red, yellow, and green lights moved southward along the coast, the solitary light came back again to land, and all was quiet.

I was the only attendant next morning at prayers. M'Lucas, who was curiously particular about his household attending these devotions, growled and objurgated both before and after them. At breakfast neither Ted or Miss M'Lucas appeared.

"Go up," said the laird crossly to the table-maid, "to your mistress' room, and see what is keeping her."

In a few minutes the girl came back with astonishment in every feature of her countenance.

"Well?" roared M'Lucas.

"Please, sir, Miss is no' there."

"What do you say?"

"She's no' there, sir, her ped's no' peen sleepit in last night."

A thought struck me, and I rushed up stairs to Ted's room, and burst open the door. It also was empty, and had evidently not been occupied on the previous night; on the dressing-table was a piece of paper with a message addressed to M'Lucas—all it said was—

"We are gone to be married. Pursuit is useless."

I was certainly astounded, but old M'Lucas seemed rather exhilarated than otherwise as I delivered him the line I had found in Ted's room.

"Gracious, couldn't he have seen that it was all right. It was a daft thing in him to go off in that way, but it's just as I wished after all."

"Will you take no steps about it?" I said.

"Steps! not I, they'll pe back py the next poat like enough, and I will give them my plessing same as in a *novelle*."

With this he hobbled to a peerage, which he kept on a side table, and was often in the habit of perusing.

"Look here," he said, triumphantly, "read that—"only issue, Edward Valentine-Ludovic, born 1856.'"

I felt indignant at the deceit which it seemed to me Ted had condescended to, and replied—

"I can't congratulate you, sir, O'Halloran has been treacherous to his best friend."

"His friend!" shouted M'Lucas; "a miserable reprobate, a swindler, a—"

Suddenly I remembered Callum Brochkair's story.

"Sir," I said, with warmth, "none of us are without faults. Mr Taylor has his, doubtless, but he has never been in prison."

M'Lucas glared at me, his eyes almost starting out of their sockets.

"What do you mean, sir?" he shouted.

"Probably," I replied, "you have heard of Callum Brochkair."

The response he made to this was to rush to the bell rope, which he pulled down. Then, with a livid countenance, he flung open the door, and with many oaths called for the footman to turn me out of the house. I bade him good morning, and came away. On the road I met the factor with his trap, and sent him on to the castle for my things. I stamped across the moor for Stronbuy in a storm of feeling. I had been deceived—poor Taylor had been infamously used—who could have expected it of Ted? I strode into the house, and flung open the parlour door. There on the sofa, regaling himself with a glass of grog, a long churchwarden pipe, and a novel from Stronbuy's shelves, lay Ted!

"You here?" I cried, "you!"

"Of course," replied he, coolly, "where else should I

be? Isn't this our home? Home, sweet home, you know."

"But Ted," I said, puzzled, "about this elopement, didn't you go?"

"Not I," he said, "I came here, no place like home!"

"But Miss M'Lucas is—"

"Off, of course she is, and so is Robert Taylor, Esq. of Reudle, grandson of the famous inventor of the pill. All good attend him. I knocked off his hat with an old shoe of Davie's as he went off last night in the boat. Glad I was to see him away. He's given me no end of trouble and anxiety, that boy, but virtue is its own reward. Take it coolly. Sit down and have some grog. I fancy you have been raging at me all the way from Tostary. Treacherous scoundrel! infamous blackguard, and so on. Eh?"

"Ted, my boy," I said, "I can't be too thankful. Tell me all about it."

"Oh, it would take me a week to tell you. I've been trying to put matters right ever since I went to Tostary first; arranging with the bodach of Glenbogary, keeping all things sweet. No joke, I can tell you."

"The bodach of Glenbogary!"

"Of course, the bodach of Glenbogary! Bob had a mask, and a wig, and an old coat, and a pair of stilts, down at Davie Boyle's. He very nearly came to grief more than once though. He was a fool to have tried that bumptious advocate. It might have ended the whole business."

"But about their marriage?"

"Oh, that's all right, though it bothered me a good deal. First there was the banns in church, that rather stumped me, but I found that pasting up a notice on the registrar's door was all that was needed when any one had conscientious scruples to being 'cried' in kirk. I was conscientious, so was the registrar, he took a reasonable fee, and wrote the names out in a hand no one could read if they had tried. No one did try, for all were making fools of themselves about this election. Then there was the old woman from Barra?"

"The old woman from Barra?"

"Yes. Somebody was needed to act as a matron, so an old cousin from Barra, a sister of Mrs M'Tavish's, had to be unearthed. She is ten years older than Mrs M'Tavish, so you may imagine she was a rickety piece of goods to convey south. She came all right, however, by the steamer. The 'man' managed that."

"The 'man'?"

Yes, the 'man.' We commissioned him, and sent him off to take charge of the old lady. I believe Croker Drumle thinks he went to preach to the fishermen. He got a good tip, which was all he wanted. Then there was old M'Audle."

"What! was he in the affair?"

"Oh, yes; Miss Kate went to him and got him to consent to marry them. He was not very loth to do it, for he likes her and hates old M'Lucky. He

was to meet them in Glasgow and tie the knot. I gave him a new hat at Tomindoun when I saw him off—by way of a fee in advance! They'll be spliced to-night and off to London. We'll find them there. I think I had better keep dark here all to-morrow, and then we can make tracks too, before the ban-dogs of old Tostary are set upon us."

It was agreed to be as he said—that we should go south at once. No one but the factor and his wife knew of Ted being at Stronbuy, and if they suspected anything they said nothing. They helped us with our packing. The carriage was brought opposite Stronbuy, and in the early morning we quietly effected our retreat by the same road by which we had arrived. We reached the old rickety pier, where we found the old fisherman at his post as if he had never moved since we saw him last. In half an hour up came the crowded steam-boat to the wharf. We bade good-by to the factor and away we went.

On stepping on board, the first person we met was Dr M'Aulay. He expressed no surprise at seeing us.

"I know all apout it," he said. "Davie Boyle told me himself. Put if you are leaving the country for fear of Tostary you need not have vexed yourselves."

"Has he found out?" said Ted.

"May pe he hes, may pe he hes not. He's gone where there is no secrets—he's dead!"

"Dead!" we exclaimed.

"Ay, that's what he is. He never knew the truth

of the marriage. You hadn't been away, Mr Gunter, ten minutes when the post brought him a letter telling him about the London Company."

"The London Company?"

"Ay, it's broken, and he had twenty thousand pounds in it. He fell on the floor in a fit. They sent for me, put when I got to Tostary he was quite dead. I'm sure he hasn't altered his will. There's plenty left even after the Company's loss."

We parted with the doctor at a ferry where the boat stopped, and continued on our way. At the Crinan Canal we met the boat from the south with the newspapers. In the Glasgow papers of that day our friend's marriage was modestly recorded.

"At the George Hotel, Glasgow, on the 30th September, by the Rev. Dr M'Audle, minister of Drissaig, Mr Robert Taylor, Reudle, to Miss Kate M'Lucas, Tostary."

Next morning we were in London. Crowning the summit of a pile of letters, we found a hurried note from Bob. He and his wife had just heard the startling news from Tostary by a telegram from Dr M'Aulay. They were going to start away back again. "Kate wished to be at the old man's funeral. She was very much cut up, of course."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### GATHERED THREADS.

LIFE was rather slow with us for a time after our arrival in the metropolis. We did not take so kindly to the toils of the public service as we perhaps should have done, and our thoughts were more occupied with Stronbuy and its surroundings than with the protocols and parchments that lay on our desk. In the autumn evenings Ted and I roamed about the parks, talking of our happy days in the north, and wondering how all our old friends were getting on.

"After all," said Ted, one Sunday evening as we were sauntering along the Bird-cage Walk, "the life of the savage is the happiest life. A head clear as a bell; lungs inhaling the freshest of air; no knowledge of indigestion. Nothing like it, I think. We had better cut civilisation and go somewhere."

"Where?" I said.

"Oh, Manitoba, or Moab, or Madagascar, or Martinique. What does it matter?"

"There, methinks, would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind."

"That's all very well, Ted, but how could the Go-

vernment of Great Britain and the colonies be carried on without the exertions of our noble selves?"

"Oh, nonsense!"

"I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race;
Iron-jointed, supple-sinewed: they shall dive and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun;
Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks—
Not with blinded eyesight pouring over miserable books!"

"After all, Ted, there is something to be said for civilisation. Here is Westminster Abbey—not so grand a temple perhaps as Glenbogary or the great cave of Eilan Horsa, but still very well in its way. Suppose we go to service, and see whether we can't get our troubled minds a little quieted."

"All right," said Ted, "dim religious light, historical associations, and all that sort of thing very pleasing, but give me old M'Audle and his wooden box, and his grandfather's sermons. 'He's the poy, the doctor!' as Ballachantui used to say, though I believe there are some rather good hands in the Abbey just now. There is Hope; and the Dean is always in good form."

We found a great crowd gathered at the western door of the nave of the Abbey, and when it was thrown open the vast space was filled in a few minutes. We got seats not far from the stone pulpit

in the north aisle, close by the slab on which is inscribed "Rare Ben Jonson!" We could not see the choir stalls very well, but we were in a good position for hearing the sermon. The clergy and choristers filed in, and evening prayers commenced. We heard the clear tones of the precentor ringing through the building, and the well-known voice of the Dean as he read the lessons. Then there was a hymn—a figure in white knelt in the pulpit. When he rose we saw the ruddy countenance of the Bishop of Watton.

"It's Bishop Grocote," I whispered to Ted.

"And a very good sort he is," said he.

The Bishop leaned over the book-board of the pulpit, cast his eye over his great audience, and slowly and distinctly enunciated his text (Eccles. i. 2), "All is vanity."

"This cry," he began, using no notes whatever, and speaking with great deliberation and earnestness, "came not from a man crushed down with misery, but from a king amid the luxuries of a palace. It is echoed to-day, not from the homes of our poor, but from the mansions of the rich and mighty. Life, it says, is a great mistake altogether."

The Bishop then went on to relate a personal experience of his own. In the past summer he had sought relaxation from many cares and ecclesiastical distractions in a remote Highland glen. Then came a description of the scenery of Brex; but even there, in that peaceful valley, he had heard the sentiment

of this old Jewish king repeated, casting its dark and appalling shadow upon the glory of the summer landscape. From this he passed to the causes that led to this mournful estimate of life. The speculations of science as to the origin of the world, the indolent lives which many of our upper classes were leading, the want of faith in immortality. In all he said, he showed that he had been studying the subject deeply since his visit to Brex. The theories of Helmholtz, the moaning of Schopenhauer, the sociology of Spencer, the philosophy of Stuart Mill, were all taken up in turn, and treated in a wonderfully masterly way. I couldn't help thinking he had Dick Purden before him in his mind all the time he was speaking, and no one who heard him but must have felt the tone of reality about all that he said. The main part of his sermon was a piece of close reasoning, but when he drew towards the conclusion there were some brilliant flashes of imagination, and touches of pathos that thrilled one. The sermon closed with an appeal to his hearers to fight manfully with these black shadows, and to listen to a voice that came to them still as full of inspiration and blessing as ever—"Come unto me, I will give you rest."

The audience had listened to the orator with great attention, and when he finished there was a rustle all through the church, which told how closely they had been held by the spell withdrawn. Then there

came a hymn, some prayers, and the great concourse of people poured out of the nave into the bright light.

"I say, old fellow," said Ted, "if we had a few preachers like that there would be some pleasure in going to church. I give in about old M'Audle. I think the Bishop *does* take the shine out of him."

"I should think so," I replied. "I wish Dick Purden had been there to hear him."

"Your wish, then, has been gratified," said a voice behind me, and turning round I saw the stalwart form of our Highland radical, with Miss Werther leaning upon his arm. He was dressed just as if he was on the moors at Brex—in rough grey clothes, and a low-crowned white hat, from which hung several salmon flies.

"I'm delighted to see you," I said. "And Miss Werther, too! What a happy meeting!"

"Allow me," said Dick, "to tell you that this is Miss Werther no longer—let me introduce you to Mrs Purden."

"It be so," said she, "We ver married by vat you call Herr registrar. The Bishop was ver angry."

"I hope," I said, after making my congratulations, "you liked the Bishop's sermon. He handled Helmholtz and some of your friends a little roughly."

"Oh, ver much so; but Dick and I are spiritualists now. Vill you come to our seance? It is ver interesting."

Paul now appeared with Mrs Grocote and her two daughters, and we stood conversing together on the tombstones at St Margaret's Church, waiting for Paul's carriage to come up.

"I'm so glad to have met you," said he to Ted and myself, "for I want you to dine with me to-morrow. I only arrived from Brex on Friday. The Bishop is coming, and I hope we will have a happy party. By the way, I expect Trant also."

The carriage now came up, and Paul and the Grocote's drove off. Purden and his wife got into a hansom, making me promise to come and see them at their house in Nottinghill, when they would show me some wonderful spiritualistic manifestations. Dick had given up his farm, where he had been successful; and as Miss Werther had a little money of her own, they were able to live very comfortably. He had, however, an ambition to enter Parliament, in order to ventilate his ideas upon the land laws; and the member for Bumpe, who had quite taken him up, had good hopes of getting him a seat for a radical borough in Lancashire. All this his wife told me before we parted.

Ted and I duly presented ourselves on the Tuesday following our meeting, at Mr Paul's splendid mansion at Mayfair. Before going upstairs to the drawing-room, and while divesting myself of my overcoat, I thought I saw, peeping through a half open door, the visage of Callum Brochkair.

"I think," I ventured to say to the giant in plush, "that is a man from Brex?"

"'E is, sir. 'Is name his Cullom Broker. 'E came hup from the 'Ighlands with foxes for Sir Martin Musgrave."

"Will you tell him," I said, "to meet me when I am leaving, after dinner? I wish to see him."

I found the Bishop, Mrs Grocote and her daughters, and Sir Martin Musgrave in the drawing-room. Trant also was there, and came to meet us with a beaming countenance. There was nothing there to tell of the loss he had sustained by the bankrupt Company. We had a very pleasant dinner-party, and the Bishop was most exuberant, going over his northern experiences—everything had been delightful.

"*So* charming," chorussed his daughters.

"All but the Highland parson," grunted Sir Musgrave. "Eh, my Lord Bishop? By Jove, my naturally peaceful and Christian spirit is roused when I think of those slaughtered deer."

"And the 'beggarly dissenter,' my lord," said I.

"And Purden's port," said Paul.

"And the Function," said Sir Martin.

"My dear friends," said the bishop, "these little troubles seem to me now, as I look back on them, to have been positively delightful. They fit into the beautiful picture of the past. I have such real troubles to contend with now that anything disagreeable about them is as if it were not."

The rubicund countenance of the bishop seemed as if trouble had always been a stranger to him; but his wife, who bore the sorrows of the diocese, heaved a deep sigh.

"Ah, it is very dreadful! The Church Union is carrying things to a sad length!"

I took occasion to say to Mr Paul how glad I was to see Trant in such good spirits after his troubles.

"Oh, he is a happy man," replied he. "Have you not heard of his engagement? Pity, they say, is akin to love, and Miss M'Lean was filled with such sorrow for his misfortunes that she threw overboard the advocate, notwithstanding his M.P.ship. They are to be married in a few months."

"And what is Trant doing now?"

"Well, he really has been very fortunate. There were several of us Australians, who were so pleased with him and his conduct about the company, that we have started him as agent for our wool clip. It is all to be consigned to him from Australia. He will make a mighty good thing out of it."

"I suppose you lost heavily by the company yourself?"

"Yes, I dropped a good deal of money; but I am able to float on. The heaviest loser is that man we met at Tostary—the puffed-up man, you know."

"What! Publius Park?"

"Yes. He came an awful cropper. By the way,

you remember his high talk about art and his valuable collection?"

"Very well. The highest style of art is the idylistic," said I, recollecting Dougal's parody on the Drissaig lecture.

"Yes, yes! Well, when his pictures were sold they only got a pound or two for works that he valued at hundreds. There were grand catalogues printed, and dealers went down to the sale from London."

"They weren't genuine—the pictures, I mean?"

"No; mere daubs—palpable imitations. I believe that discovery has cut up Park more than all his losses in the company."

"How about old Tostary's money?"

"Well, he had about fifteen thousand in it, and, of course, that has gone. But that is a small affair compared with the value of his property. Your friend Taylor is a lucky man."

"He deserves all his luck."

"Very possibly; but every deserving person doesn't hang up his hat in a house like Tostary, with a clear income of twenty thousand a-year."

"You don't say so?"

"I do indeed. Old Crusty, the Edinburgh writer, is trustee under M'Lucas' will. Nearly every sixpence he had goes to his niece. I'm not so sure she would have come so well off if he had known who she was to marry. By the way, I had an idea that your friend O'Halloran there was to have been the happy man."

"I thought so myself once, but I have a suspicion he has been always looking out in another quarter. You see how very attentive he is to the bishop's daughter?"

"What, Grace Grocote! She is a very fine girl that, though she refused poor Wynge. We were all in love with her before they left Brex, even the wild parson softened to her."

"Did you come to terms with him?" I said.

"Well, I'm happy to say I did. It's a long story now, and I won't bother you with it. I agreed to fence his glebe, and do some other things for him. I rather took to the fellow, do you know. He has a great deal of originality about him. He went out with us more than once to the forest, and beat us all —he's a capital shot."

"Did he see the bishop?"

"Oh, yes! they got great friends. The bishop went to church, and the parson got him to hold a simple service in the school-house. Ecclesiastical matters are much sweeter at Brex. I rather think Purden did nothing to make things better with his curious notions."

"I was very much astonished at finding him up here, and a married man."

"Well, you know, what could I do? She would have him, and he was quite plastic in her hands, any clever person can mould him like a piece of clay. There was nothing for it but to allow her to have her

own way. The Bishop was in a fine state about them declining the services both of himself and the parson, and going to the registrar. They both have an absurd love of singularity. But I believe Dick will do well yet, he has some talent in him."

Callum was waiting me at the door as I left Mr Paul's, and walked along with us to the club, into the smoking-room of which we took him, and administered to him a glass of grog.

"Well! well! shentlemans, that is the pest drop I've had since I left Brex. Didn't I tell you we would meet again, Mr Gunter, as the minister of Inverary said. You would pe hearing apout the 'man' was in the steampoat with us yon tay, Mr Gunter?"

"No, Callum, what of him?"

"Och, he's given up his preaching, and groaning, and praying. There was an old lady from Barra he went south with in the steampoat. Well, he's gone and married her, and not a single tooth in her head."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Ted, "that must be Mrs M'Tavish's sister, who was brought south to do the respectable at Bob Taylor's wedding."

"The ferry identical same," said Callum, slapping his philabeg, "that's the ferry woman."

"It's most extraordinary," said Ted.

"Ay, she hes a goot plenishing in Barra, and a farm of her own, and M'Lucas left her five hundred pounds in his will. She was wonderful taken with Sandy's, the 'man's,' gift at the praying."

"How will Drissaig get on without him?" I said.

"Deed, I do not know; put Mr Croker, his master, was ferry angry—they tell me he's become a moderate because of it. Time for me to pe going, it's late hours you keep in this town."

"I suppose you know the way home, Callum?"

"No, indeed! It's worse than the biggest forest I was ever upon, put I will take a cab. Good night, shentlemen."

I will now say the same to any who may have accompanied me thus far in my story, for I have now little to add. Bob Taylor and his wife flourish at Tostary, and Mr and Mrs Trant spend the summer months at Maolachy. At the coming general election it is arranged that Bob is to oppose the advocate, and as he is very popular with everybody, little doubt is entertained as to his success. Ted is to be married next autumn to Grace Grocote, but before that event he has promised to go down with me to Tostary to the baptism of the son and heir of the laird. At which ceremony Dr M'Audle is to officiate, and the whole country side are to be there.

FINIS.

TURNBULL AND SPEARS, PRINTERS.

# MACNIVEN & WALLACE'S PUBLICATIONS.

## A SCOTCH STUDENT:

MEMORIALS OF PETER THOMSON, A.M.,

Minister of the Free Church, St. Fergus. By the Rev. GEORGE STEVEN, M.A., Logiealmond. Second edition, with Portrait on Steel, crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

"This brief and sympathetic memoir is well calculated to make a deep and beneficial—it may be hoped an abiding—impression upon students for the ministry, to whatever Church they may belong."—*Scotsman.*

"Since Norman M'Leod's 'Earnest Student,' no sketch of the deeper side of student life or of the intellectual and spiritual currents which are at present playing around the minds of many young men, has more interested us than this graceful and touching memoir."—*Christian.*

"An interesting and touching sketch."—*Christian World.*

## ALFRED TENNYSON:

HIS LIFE AND WORKS.

By WALTER E. WACE. Crown 8vo, price 6s., with Engravings of Somersby Cross, and Earliest Portrait of the Laureate.

"By far the fullest collection of facts relating to Mr Tennyson that has yet appeared."—*Publishers' Circular.*

"In every way creditable to the industry and judgment of its author."—*Scotsman.*

## HEALTH LECTURES FOR THE PEOPLE.

DELIVERED IN EDINBURGH DURING THE WINTER OF 1880-81.

CONTENTS.

**CARE OF THE BODY.** By Professor FLEEMING JENKIN.
**FOOD AND DRINK.** By J. A. RUSSELL, M.B.
**LUNGS AND AIR.** By ANDREW WILSON, Ph.D.
**BLOOD AND ITS CIRCULATION.** By JAMES FOULIS, M.D.
**ACCIDENTS, &c.** By Professor ANNANDALE.
**HINTS TO WOMEN.** By ANGUS MACDONALD, M.D.
**REARING OF CHILDREN.** By C. E. UNDERHILL, M.B.
**WATER IN HOUSES.** By STEVENSON MACADAM, Ph.D.
**STIMULANTS AND TOBACCO.** By Professor T. R. FRASER.
**PREVENTABLE DISEASES.** By ANDREW SMART, M.D.

Crown 8vo, sewed, 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.

EDINBURGH: MACNIVEN & WALLACE.

# MACNIVEN & WALLACE,

## 144 PRINCES STREET, EDINBURGH.

---

## CABINET OF BIOGRAPHY.

Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d. each; extra cloth, gilt, 3s.

**THOMAS CARLYLE**: the Story of his Life. By HENRY J. NICOLL. Second Edition Revised, with Portrait on Steel.

CHEAP EDITION, 1s.

"Prepared with considerable intelligence and judgment."—*Athenæum.*

"A very pleasantly-written and discriminative biography."—*Scotsman.*

"A biography that all classes must read with pleasure and profit."—*Public Opinion.*

**Masters in History**—GIBBON, GROTE, MACAULAY, MOTLEY. By the Rev. PETER ANTON, Kilsyth.

"Displays thorough mastery of the subject, and considerable faculty of appreciative criticism."—*Scotsman.*

"All interesting sketches, and may be read with at least, some pleasure."—*Spectator.*

**Great Novelists**—SCOTT, THACKERAY, DICKENS, LYTTON. By J. C. WATT.

"Mr Watt's volume is, on the whole, carefully done, and likely, we should think, to be both of interest and service."—*Academy.*

**Great Scholars**—BUCHANAN, BENTLEY, PORSON, and PARR. By H. J. NICOLL.

"This volume of the useful series of short popular biographies is decidedly the best that has yet appeared."—*Academy.*

"Should prove a valuable incentive to many a struggling student."—*Glasgow Herald.*

**Great Orators**—BURKE, FOX, SHERIDAN, PITT. By H. J. NICOLL, author of "Thomas Carlyle," etc.

"Mr Nicoll has a knack of treating his subject at once lightly and solidly. He has presented all the most important facts in the lives of the four statesmen, linking them together by a pleasant thread of anecdote."—*Scotsman.*

"Mr Nicoll shows competent knowledge and conveys it in a neat way. We feel he has many of the qualities which go far to make a good biographer."—*Examiner.*

"The best popular account of these great men that has yet appeared. Every young man should read it."—*Freeman.*

**England's Essayists**—BACON, ADDISON, DE QUINCEY, etc. By the Rev. PETER ANTON, Kilsyth. [*Shortly.*

***Other Volumes in Preparation.***

---

MACNIVEN & WALLACE, EDINBURGH.

2.